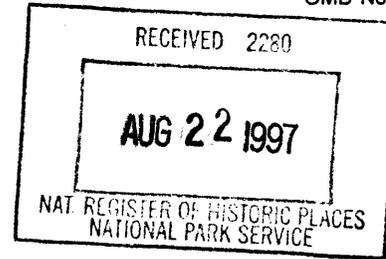


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1146

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Road Up Raritan Historic District

other names/site number River Road

2. Location

street & number River Road: #s 625, 649, 685, 701, 730, 771, 851, 871, 899 not for publication <sup>N/A</sup>

city or town Piscataway Township  vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Middlesex code 023 zip code 08854

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO  
State of Federal/agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson R. Beall

9/18/97

Road Up Raritan HD  
Name of Property

Middlesex County, NJ  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
13	1	buildings
1		sites
2		structures
		objects
16	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

2

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling  
Domestic/secondary structure  
Agriculture/agricultural outbuilding  
Agriculture/field

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling  
Domestic/secondary structure  
Recreation/outdoor recreation

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Dutch Colonial  
Greek Revival  
Italianate

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone; brick  
walls wood:weatherboard  
roof asphalt  
other brick (one house) and chimneys  
wood trim, lintels, cornices, porches

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Road Up Raritan HD  
Name of Property

Middlesex County, NJ  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** N/A  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Settlement
- Transportation
- Military
- Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1685-1900

**Significant Dates**

1743  
1777-78  
1890s trolley line along River Road

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # NJ 478
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Middlesex County Cultural & Heritage Comm.

Road Up Raritan HD  
Name of Property

Middlesex County, NJ  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** ±69 acres

Plainfield Quad

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	118	541271210	44817020
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	118	541271810	448170610

3	118	541301010	4481681610
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	118	541291810	4481661610

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Ursula Brecknell, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization Piscataway Twp. Historic Preservation Commis date March 1996

street & number 36 Ellis Drive telephone (908) 359-3498

city or town Belle Mead state NJ zip code 08502

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetRoad Up Raritan H.D.  
Piscataway Township, Middlesex Co., N.J.Section number 7 Page 1

The Road up Raritan Historic District of Piscataway Township, Middlesex County, covers a 1.2-mile segment of River Road along the northerly side of the Raritan River. Its southerly end lies about 1+1/2 miles northwesterly from the intersection of River Road and Landing Lane, the site of the historic Raritan Landing in the eighteenth century. The northerly end of the district begins about two miles southeasterly along River Road from a hamlet once known as Fieldville and three miles from the early village of Bound Brook (now Bound Brook Borough) just across the county border in Somerset County. It is essentially a linear district, with buildings mainly on one side of the road and protected flood and alluvial plain on the other, with River Road as a spine and a western boundary along the Raritan River. The road segment itself is counted as a site, so that its historical significance and its integrity of location, alignment, and width may be recognized. The road today--and historically--begins at what was once a 17th-century highway (now NJ Route 27 through Highland Park), and then follows the river westward and northward into neighboring Somerset County, where it joins another historic highway once known as "the Old York Road." At one time, the whole of this road between Highland Park and Bound Brook displayed the same character that can still be felt within the district, but severe intrusions have cut into the old farms and removed their old dwellings and outbuildings. The district, therefore, gathers together those contributing buildings that stand relatively close to each other and convey at least a partial sense of the landscape from its heyday in the 18th and 19th centuries. There are 9 houses plus outbuildings representing the period of earliest settlement by Englishmen and Dutchmen, as well as dwellings built by their descendants on the same family farms during the 19th century. There are 7 contributing buildings (two others, #3 and #7, have already been separately listed on the Registers) and one non-contributing outbuilding. There are also two contributing structures (bridges) and one site (the road itself).

Three contributing buildings are homesteads of different generations of the Onderdonk family, who arrived in Piscataway ca. 1750; three others stand on the farmsteads of the Smock family; the remaining three represent the Field family.

The terrain is relatively flat, with the county's Johnson Park claiming most of the land between the river and River Road, maintained in a natural state of woods and fields, traversed by runs of water, including McEtis Brook, which flows below the road under a single-arch stone culvert. The culvert and much of the parkland are included in the district.

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Piscataway Township, Middlesex Co., N.J.Section number 7 Page 1A

In the period of significance, the setting of the district was rural, agricultural open space, a setting which is still suggested on the westerly (the meadow, or river, side) side of River Road by the undeveloped county parkland that occupies most of the length of the district. This land has not been recontoured since it was last farmed. It is currently being allowed to grow back up into woodland, and this feature--which is not present outside the district--helps unify the 1.2-mile stretch of River Road and focus attention on its historic farmhouses. River Road through this section is a two-lane asphalt-paved road with narrow, paved shoulders, altogether approximately 34 feet wide. It still follows the winding course that it has followed since the 18th century, and it remains a two-lane road which it has been since the 18th century. On the easterly side of the road, however, 20th-century suburban development that began after the trolley line was installed, and which continued into the 1990s, has presented a serious visual intrusion on the upland side of the district. Eleven residential streets terminate at the east side of River Road in the district, and approximately twenty-six lots with frontage on the east side of the road are developed with suburban tract houses (and one former public school) chiefly from the 1960s to the present. Consequently, the boundaries of the district have been drawn to exclude these non-contributing properties. Few of them are hidden with enough trees and shrubs to be truly inconspicuous. The historic houses have the advantage, however, of larger lots, more conspicuous siting or presentation, and taller trees, and thus draw more attention to themselves. Yet, even though the recent houses outnumber the historic homes, their presence, combined with the complete absence of commercial uses, further cements the district's character as distinct both from the mixed commercial character of River Road to the northwest of the district and the corporate research/office and university campus character that prevails to the southeast. As a result, the district meets the requirement of National Register Criterion C that it be a distinguishable entity.

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Road up Raritan H.D.  
Piscataway Twp., Middlesex Co., N.J.

The river flows in a southeasterly direction and the road parallels it in great part, although it has its own curves and bends dictated by other circumstances in the past. On the far side of the road is what was historically called the upland, which was a safe place to build a dwelling or warehouse or shop--safe from periodic freshets or floods in the river. The "falls" of the Raritan River, beyond which transportation by sloops was impossible, lay just beyond the early shipping landing, called Raritan Landing, about a mile west of New Brunswick. At three places, in dry seasons, the river was so shallow that it could be forded on foot, which is true even today. One ford was east of New Brunswick, one at Raritan Landing, the prime shipping center, and the third and final "upper ford" opposite Matthias Smock's house (# 7), and called Smock's Ford on one Revolutionary War map. (See Maps in Addenda)

The terrain gradually rises from flood plain to alluvial plain before reaching the road. A modest rise continues on the far side of the road, at times becoming slightly hilly at the first house (# 1) and also beyond the District in the vicinity of Landing Lane, with the notable Cornelius Low mansion, Ivy Hall, on the bluff. The John Field house was set on an eminence affording a fine distant view at one time. (Photo #s 2, 10) The Watchung Mountains rise at a distance back of the river valley. They were to play a role in the American Revolution and bring the war to River Road.

The prevailing aspect of the landscape within this District is of greenery. The road edges are fringed with native vegetation and at many places with woods. (Photo #s 10, 22, 27, 44, 45, 49) In winter, the river itself can be seen through the stark leafless trees at some places. The river plain was very early divided off into segments as part of the plantations on the far side of the road, which often extended in depth internally for a mile. One such segment of 24.8 acres belonging to the 18th-century Isaac Onderdonk Farm has been given to Piscataway Township as open space by late owner Walter C. Meuly and named Meuly's Woods after him. There is within it a pond filling a former river channel, about 500 feet east of the present course. This has become a refuge for wild life. (See map of sites and photographs in Addenda.)

When farms were active the river was doubtless visible, as cows and sheep were herded to its bank. Peter Wacker, in his study of

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Road up Raritan H.D.  
Piscataway Twp., Middlesex Co., N.J.

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cultural geography of the 18th century, noted that in these parts there was considerable treeless terrain with grasslands, which appealed to hunters. A view of the landscape, sketched c. 1840, with New Brunswick in the distance, perhaps can convey some impression of the river plain during the period of significance, and an aerial view taken earlier in this century records the continuing existence of farmland and familiar landscape of past times. (See Addenda sheets.)

The homesteads' dwellings are moderately close to the road, with minor differences in setback, except for the Lewis Onderdonk House (# 4), which is closer, and the Smock/Voorhees House ( 9), which is more distant. (Photo #s 23, 45) Four buildings face more or less to the sun, resulting in gable-end walls turned to the road. Between sites, all but one (# 5) of which are on the far side of the road, there are woods (photo #s 16, 21, 22 23, 27, 28, 32, 33, 40, 44, 45), with very few exceptions, the exceptions being modern houses, which have been excluded from the District. While this is not characteristic of the original plantation setting, which one would not expect to have survived, it serves to set off each farmhouse and makes it possible to grasp the rhythm and relationship of farmsteads. On the near (river) side of the road where the park has its greatest width, there are also a few modern residences on small lots, inconspicuous for the most part as they are enveloped on three sides by trees and foliage. (Photo #s 27, 49.) These, too, have been excluded.

River Road, still meandering in slight curves and bends following the original path paced out by the Indians, travels in a somewhat southeasterly direction. Because of its antiquity as a major road, its use has built up over the decades, and today it carries heavy traffic at certain hours. It remains two lanes wide, since the threat of converting it into an extension of major highway Route 18 has been abandoned in favor of another route.

River Road in itself, despite its major role in transportation over three centuries, remains--remarkably--a pleasant drive through this clearly historic area. Its relatively narrow width and lack of paved shoulders continues to recall the District's historic rural setting. Properties along this segment of River Road are zoned residential.

Beyond the southeast terminus of the District, the Colgate-Palmolive Corporation and Rutgers University own large tracts, which Rutgers has left in woods at steamside and Colgate has landscaped with large lawns, with its office building complex set back distantly from the road. Beyond the District, eastward from Hoes Lane, the recreational area of Johnson Park spreads out on

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Road up Raritan H.D.  
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both sides of Landing Lane and encompasses "East Jersey Olde Towne," a unique collection of historic buildings moved there in the 1970s by an entrepreneur from other places in Middlesex County to preserve them. This part of Johnson Park is developed for recreation and has a park-like appearance. It does, in fact, resemble the riverfront as seen in the illustration of New Brunswick in Barber and Howe's Gazetteer of 1844. (See Addenda.)

There are now a number of new streets breaking into River Road, which are somewhat disruptive of the original appearance of a continuous farmscape. They extend from the northeasterly side of River Road, but have been excluded from the District, which is held together by Johnson Park and River Road.

The three earliest vernacular dwelling houses are one-and-a-half stories; the remainder of buildings are two to two-and-a-half stories tall, the latter appearing in the second half of the 19th century, seemingly having evolved from smaller structures on the farms. Clapboards or shingles were the main fabric chosen to cover a wood frame, though it is noteworthy that the Field family favored masonry for their first homes, and the John Field dwelling with datestone remains to document it. Lewis Onderdonk erected an I-style house in brick, an aberration both in form and fabric. Lewis was born and reached adulthood in his grandfather's Dutch dwelling next door. His taste remains unexplained. All the buildings have or once had interior end chimneys with brick stacks, and all have pitched roofs.

The majority of houses follow a rather traditional form of block and wing, with the kitchen unit either to one side or at back, perhaps using an earlier structure for the purpose. The rear ell of the Lewis Onderdonk House was enlarged over time to a total two-story addition at back, and about 1940 a frame two-story section was added laterally, with little impact on its integrity. The John Field stone house acquired a frame one-room addition laterally about mid-19th century, and an adjoining frame kitchen at end of century. The Isaac Onderdonk House had a 19th-century two-story addition with summer kitchen of awkward proportions (as seen in photograph) replaced in the 1940s with a wing sympathetic to it. There has been no loss of integrity from these changes and additions in any of these instances.

The colonial houses remain styleless except for following Dutch and English custom, but wear attributes of later styles in mantelpieces, architraves, and doors. Some have original hardware and small-paned window sash. Daub infill of interstices in the

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Matthias Smock House can be seen. (Photo # 36) Cater-cornered fireplaces also relate to the customs of the area. (Photo #s 19, 35)

The styles for the remaining houses are best described as vernacular renderings of Late Federal through Greek Revival, expressed on a building frame of rectangular footprint, the classic post and beam construction. Ceiling height, entranceways, and size of windows, along with wood finishes and ornament, mark the Greek Revival mode. The Jonathan Smock and Onderdonk/Bonham houses display the influence of the Italianate in Roman windows in apices and in cornices at eaves and windows, but are slightly eclectic with cross gables. The Lewis Onderdonk House was singular in leaning to Gothic Revival and Queen Anne for an end-of-century update, with cross gables over its deepened dimensions and Eastlake details and imbricated shingles at front gable, with small panes of glass bordering window sash, as seen in a photograph but now somewhat altered.

There is little else of Victorian-era features present except for porches and bay windows. As for the porches, there was a wraparound form added to the Jonathan Smock house (# 8) and late porches added to the John Field, Isaac Onderdonk, and Onderdonk/Bonham houses. An unusual front addition perpendicular to the main block on the Smock/Voorhees House (#9) provided for a small porch flanking each side. A fine Greek Revival portico stands in front of the entrance of the Field/Dunham House (# 2). (Photo # 12) The Richard Field, Jr., house (# 6) has a simple shed-roofed portico. Bay windows were introduced in the Victorian era houses (#s 5, 8, and 9) and on the frame addition of the stone house (# 1).

Few outbuildings remain. Three associated with the Matthias Smock House were not seemingly included in the original nomination to State and National Registers. These include a smoke house judged to be of early date, a carriage house, now serving as a garage, and a field well house and have been listed as contributing. (Photo #s 37, 38, 39, 40) A brick smoke house belonging to the Isaac Onderdonk House is included now, as it was not part of the original nomination to the Registers. (Photo # 21) Only one well house has been counted as contributing because it is intact, though two other

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properties have their original deep stone-lined dug wells but lack original housing.

A County Survey for the Cultural and Heritage Commission in 1977-78 determined that all these buildings were eligible for placement on the National Register as part of a District. A follow-up eligibility evaluation was conducted in 1985 with partial state funding and confirmed the original finding.

An Inventory of buildings, structures, and sites follows.

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Road up Raritan H.D.  
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1. JOHN FIELD HOUSE, 1743 (Block 510/25.13) Contributing  
625 River Road (Photos #s: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

This is a fieldstone dwelling house built in 1743 originating as two rooms, longitudinally laid out, about 17 feet deep and 30 feet wide. To this was joined an additional room of same depth but of frame construction. It has been assumed that this took place about mid-19th century. A final frame addition for kitchen of same depth was attached on same plane about turn of century. Windows now contain 2/2 sash. Clapboards cover the frame section. Roof over entire house is of synthetic material.

The stonework on front and side elevations has been heavily stuccoed, in some cases to stop water leaks. Each of the two stone units has two openings on the principal facade. Of these two have evidence of segmental arches above the windows. The others may also have had this feature but if so, it is now concealed by coats of stucco. An old photograph suggests that the arches were laid up in brick. The datestone on the gable wall has been left visible. (See photo # 3)

The stones are a reddish-gray shale, some quite large, with chip infill, laid up randomly without coursing. Original mortar can be occasionally seen, identified by its whiteness of color and fine chips of shells. At the time of the house construction the Raritan River was known for its oysters. (See John Reading's journal of the 1740s.) The height is a generous one-and-a-half stories, both floor levels exceeding the commonly used 8-foot ceiling plus 4-foot half-story. The half story, in which 2 shed-roofed dormers --the front with double windows--have been inserted, rises to almost 5 feet.

Both rooms have hefty hewn beams (joists) that measure 7 1/2 by 10 1/2 inches in one room and 7 x 10 inches in the other, beaded in both instances. They are spaced 45 inches on center. There is a cellar under the end (westerly) room, and here the beams are indeed impressive. (Photo # 6) The small unfinished area in the loft shows original adzed rafters with tie beam, also widely spaced. (Photo # 9)

In the end room are two very wide recessed door openings, the front--in second (internal) bay--measuring 40 inches. The entrance door is a replacement, in elaborate Victorian detail, containing a half pane of glass. The rear opening, not on alignment, is about the same size. In it hangs a 6-panel (raised

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Road up Raritan H.D.  
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field) door, though perhaps not original to the house (suggests the present owner).

The bulkhead entrance to the cellar, with brick side walls and stone steps, is located under the first bay (west).

Floorboards on both levels range from 12 to 17 inches.

The walls are plastered. The end room has not been "restored" as yet. This means that the original plaster applied directly over the rubble interior face of the stone walls can be seen where it still adheres after water leaks. The window trim has been removed making it possible to see how the windows were framed in. The bottom edge of the wall plaster--about 7 inches from flooring--tells how the surbases were applied at that point. These plain boards have been saved and will be reattached at a future time.

A single flight of stairs rises against the internal wall. The wall is framed with bark-covered saplings and infilled with clay and hair. The opening in front of the stairs to the next room contains a six-paneled door with flush back, hung on Dutch strap hinges. Unfortunately, the original fireplace, hearth, and chimney of the end room have been removed, replaced with a narrow straight-sided chimney that originates in the dirt cellar and continues into attic and on roof as stack. The owner says the removed mantelpiece is a simple plain board piece and is presently stored away. to it stored away.

The second room retains its deep (3-4 feet) and broad chimney, in which is a bake oven opening, but it is now concealed behind a new wall. The mantelpiece it wore at a later time has been removed but can be seen. It is representative of early Greek Revival styling with attached columns and an ornately and robustly molded frieze between dominant projecting center and end blocks. It relates to the rest of the wood finishes in this room and those in the first of the frame units. Still in place is the built-in wall cupboard to one side of the chimney. It is two-sectioned, enclosed by two pairs of doors with round wood knobs. Shelves curve inward in the larger upper section. On the rear wall, at right angles to the cupboard, is the second exterior door, which is visible externally

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Road up Raritan H.D.  
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but no longer in use. In it hangs another old paneled door with keyhole latch.

The adjoining room of the frame house has a suggested date of c. 1860, based on wood finishes, but is perhaps earlier. Inexplicably there is still another exterior doorway of great size on the rear wall, no longer in use and not visible from the outside. It is not visible from within the room either, since a flight of stairs, originating with a platform, runs against this wall, and its underside has been closed off for a closet. The flushback door indicates a paneled surface and is hung on Dutch strap hinges. (Photo # 7) Perhaps it served a lean-to before the current room was constructed.

The woodwork here reflects the Greek Revival mode in high baseboards, door surrounds with blank corner blocks, doors with slightly recessed panels (4) and light molding trim. This room has its own front entrance from the same porch that runs across the facade, and its door matches the other already described. Just beyond the porch-end is a six-sided bay window with three 2/2 sash.

The final room, the 2-bay kitchen, c. 1900, has narrow, bead-edge wainscotting below a chair rail. It has another flight of stairs leading to a full second story above the two frame additions. A semi-enclosed porch/pantry leads off the gable wall.

### Outbuilding

### Not counted

A well house--to be reassembled. Seen in photos as square-based with hipped roof. It stood above a stone-lined well, in the mortar of which could be seen: MF 1802. (Owner was obliged to remove well house while embankment that was cut down by land developer for his road was being stabilized.)

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Road up Raritan H.D.  
Piscataway Twp., Middlesex Co., N.J.

2. FIELD-DUNHAM HOUSE, 1830s, perhaps older sections Contributing  
Block 560/Lot 6: 649 River Road (Photo #s 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)

This large house faces the road, with somewhat westerly orientation. Of Georgian/Federal configuration, the main block consists of a rectangular main block of two stories having double file of rooms. A smaller unit at rear ell, possibly older, is also of two stories but of lower height; it formerly had an entrance facing southward and a shed porch, but the latter has now been enclosed and made an extension of the kitchen.

Of frame construction, the house is clapboarded, with cornerboards, under a synthetic gable roof with slight eave returns. A fascia board with minute dentils closely marks the separation of window lintels from boxed cornice at eaves. There are internal end chimneys, with one stack corbelled. A low foundation is cement-covered. Now 5 bays with center entrance, there is clear evidence that this was once a 4-bay house enlarged by a lateral extension of one bay to the right of about 7 feet and given a second entrance in gable wall, with its own portico, and an additional interior end chimney of shallow depth. The evidence is seen on the rear elevation at first story level where the clapboards are of considerable width up to the former corner of the structure. The enlargement is also visible in the cellar, where the sill of the original house can be seen. At some time past, a second story window on the principal facade was removed. Windows have 6/6 sash flanked by fixed-louver blinds. Lintels and sills are narrow and refined. Fenestration of the extension, however, has 1/1 sash on upper floors, 6/1 at first floor.

The trabeated entrance displays Greek Revival motifs with blank corner blocks over the paired sets of pilasters, providing a preview of the decor of the interior. (Photo # 12) Transom lights number 4; sidelights 3, over recessed panels. The portico of matching period has squared Doric columns with sunk panels and hipped roof. The entrance door is six-paneled. An exterior entrance at the end of the through hall also is treated with sidelights and its lintel wears decorative corner blocks matching those elsewhere

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in the interior. A second portico stands in front of the newer gable-end doorway.

The rear unit originally consisted of room and loft, with large cooking fireplace at gable end, brick-paved with stone slab at hearth. Windows adjoining chimney and on side wall contain 6/9 panes, in seemingly original sash, a most uncommon arrangement in this area. (Photo # 15) Exposed joists measure about 4 inches wide and are spaced about 2+ feet apart. A stairway to the loft ran at one time on the interior wall opposite the hearth. Its path can be detected in overhead framing. Where construction is visible adzed timbers are seen with Roman numerals. The larger-sized bricks used in the 19th century fill the interstices. Besides the enclosing of a typical kitchen leanto with ribboned windows, beyond this the kitchen unit is an added enclosed pantry. within the kitchen's stone foundation is a brick-paved root cellar. It is entered by a series of stone steps under a trapdoor from the pantry.

The floor plan of the main block offers two relatively large rooms at front, flanking the center hall and two rather shallow rooms behind, also with doorways from the hall. This distribution of space recalls a Dutch plan, reflecting the mixing of cultures in this community, the house being the residence of individuals of English extraction. Between the rooms to right of the hall is a wide flat-arched opening with a pair of doors swung awkwardly into the small back room. The hall staircase, with turned newel and balustrade in Greek Revival mode, has a single run of stairs. One large panel fills the space below the string.

Doors are for the most part six-paneled (recessed). The finish in door and window architraves is surprisingly decorative for a rural house of relatively modest proportions. Its dimensional four-petal flowers inset in corner blocks (Photo # 13) recalls the trim in the Frelinghuysen-Elmendorf House on Millstone River Road in Hillsborough and the John Beekman House farther south on the same road in Montgomery Township--homes of prominent and relatively affluent families. Above the doorway between hall and living room is a wooden grille, such as seen in much earlier houses in southern New Jersey. (Photo # 14)

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A cellar was excavated under only the parlor to right of the hall. The bulkhead is against the extended gable wall. Perhaps there had been no cellar until then, for the joists date to the first half of the 19th century. The new chimney rests on flimsy brick piers. Its shallow fireplace was intended to accommodate a grate. Mantelpieces on chimneys in both front rooms are similar, simple but suggestive of late Federal style.

The second story rooms were given a Victorian update in wood finishes. The attic shows a replacement roof, with butted rafters and ridge board. Floorboards on upper levels, unlike the more or less consistent 9 inch width below, are of various sizes, a few displaying circular-saw kerfmarks. The question briefly presents itself whether the dwelling had originated as one story.

Outbuilding:

Not counted

A well kerb (reconstruction) placed over stone-lined well of 30+ feet.

3. ISAAC ONDERDONK HOUSE, 18th C. On National Register, 1979  
Block 588, Lots 29 & 30: 685 River Road (Photo #s 16, 17, 18, 19, 20)

This is one of the few surviving 18th-century dwelling houses on six-plus acres still remaining to recall the origins of the settlement along the "Road up Raritan." (Meuly's Woods across the road were detached from this property and given for the county park.) Set back a good distance from the colonial thoroughfare, it faces south, as was the general custom, with the "Great Road" passing its gable end.

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As seen now, it is a rectangular block of double file of rooms, standing two stories tall, with a lateral addition of one story, in which is found a two-bay garage, laundry room, and study. This addition is a replacement for a late-19th century two-story summer kitchen, which occupied the same location until c. 1940, when the current owner's family took possession and saved the house, which had been abandoned for ten years. The last owners had still been Onderdonk descendants.

The building is of frame with wide clapboards and cornerboards, but had been shingled at an earlier time. Walls are brick-filled. The gabled roof has a boxed cornice, with a simple frieze below it. The raking boards are flush. Corbeled brick chimney stacks (one a replacement) are within the gable ends. Five bays wide, symmetrically composed, this reflects a doubling of the original size in the 19th century and eventually its raising to two stories. The first dwelling consisted of the two rooms to left of entrance, and the existing hall. Windows in this unit have 12/12 panes on the ground story, front and gable walls and 9/6 at back. Upper story fenestration has 6/6 sash. Fixed sash windows, paired, in the gable apex are replacements of 9 panes. Windows in the unit to right of entrance have 6/6 sash. On the lower story, there are three-paneled (recessed) shutters in front, two-paneled at back. On the upper story are movable louvered blinds.

There is a three-bay porch centered on the principal facade. The posts are plain except for an annulet at top. The front entry is in Greek Revival trabeated style. Latticework fills the space below the deck. The rear door at end of through hall is a replacement in form of Dutch door with Dutch strap hinges. The foundation rises in height from right to left as the house was constructed on ground slightly sloping toward the river. It is composed of large stones and rubble, laid more or less in courses.

There is every reason to believe that the original portion of the house began as a typical one-and-a-half-story unit. There are

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corner fireplaces, back to back. The chimney base in the cellar is of impressive scale, quite large and deep enough to walk in. (Photo # 18) The space below the front room is the only excavated area. A view into the crawlspace behind the other room reveals how the wall was built up with large boulder-like stones for a chimney base for the second fireplace. A thick wall of bricks, rather than stones, divides this cellar from the later full cellar under the other two rooms. In the original section, the floor is brick-paved. The joists above are squared, of good proportions and well-spaced.

The earliest rooms are in conventional Dutch proportions and relationship, larger to front. In these rooms are visible equally large joists, with greater spacing between them than in the cellar. Federal-style mantelpieces adorn the chimney, and somewhat shallow splayed fireboxes with hearths of old brick complete the appearance. The living room mantelpiece has plain center and end blocks, with pilasters containing inset panels. The shelf is slightly bowed. (Photo # 19) The back room mantelpiece lacks a center panel on the frieze.

The wood finishes of openings are of double overlay edged by molding, a style found at end of century in the rural areas of Central New Jersey. Doors are flushbacked with either four or six panels recessed on face. One door wears a pair of Dutch strap hinges original to house. An unusual feature--imaginably introduced later--is a large archway finished with the same trim between rooms rather than a conventional doorway in dividing wall, if in fact, any doorway was needed. A pair of 4-panel doors closes off the opening. The back room also has an opening onto the 7-1/2 foot-wide hall.

What also seems atypical is the location of the stair flight in the Federal era addition. It must be assumed that an earlier flight was removed. The newel post and railing are in Greek Revival mode. This flight occupies space taken from the area of the rear room and calls for a longitudinal passageway to this room and the hall.

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The gable end wall of this new front room (dining room) was rebuilt after the cooking fireplace of a summer kitchen was reversed to face into this room, as doubtless it once did. The chimney extends partly into the rear room, now used as a kitchen.

This kitchen was enlarged c. 1940 by breaking through the rear elevation to gain several feet of additional space for a study. The expanded room was then doubled sidewise, backing against the garage wing. A new light and airy room by design, it features a large lunette, casement windows, and French doors. The corner of the main block, which was exposed during this construction, has been left open to view and reveals the stout corner post and a diagonal brace, with bricks in the interstices. (Photo # 20)

Such changes that were undertaken by Walter Meuly to revitalize the house after ten years of vacancy were reported when the nomination to the Registers was submitted.

### Outbuilding

### Contributing

There is a brick smokehouse near the dwelling house. (Photo # 21) The brick is coursed with three rows of stretchers and one of headers. To this square structure was added, post-1940, a frame lean-to for storage.

Each section has an old board-and-batten door with large strap hinges. Both units have been reroofed with wood shingles. An old photograph shows corncrib and barns a short distance beyond the smokehouse.

#### 4. LEWIS ONDERDONK HOUSE

##### Contributing

Block 588, Lot 1: 701 River Road (Photo #s 23, 24, 25, 26)

The house built on the southern half (59+acres) of the original Isaac Onderdonk plantation is associated with his great-grandson Lewis (1816-68), who married in 1839. It has been assumed that he

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lived in a building erected on this site soon after his marriage although he did not obtain the parcel until 1854 when his aging father John (at the homestead) sold it to him and his much younger unmarried brother Isaac, and he bought out his brother.

The extant building could well fit a date in the 1840s. It is an interesting example of a curious enlargement of what originated as an I-style with center entrance for a 5-bay facade (four bays on second story). Its brick fabric also matches the time frame quite well, for there appears to have been a limited reappearance of this form of masonry house in this area about this time (Frelinghuysen House, Raritan, Van Veghten House, Finderne, John R. Staats' and Cornelius Staats' houses, Hillsborough). It was also a choice which carried a degree of prestige with it. The single file of rooms is documented by the perimeter of the original foundation and the survival of one end chimney on the present front slope of the gable roof, flanked by two window openings (one with louvered blinds hung by small H hinges) and the survival of its chimney base, which also served as fireplace with crane still in place. (Photo # 24) Thick wood slabs for sills and lintels also relate to the stylistic practice of this era. The sash of 6/1, however, relates to the final fashion update that took place at end of century. A full-facade veranda was added at that time, since removed.

Today, the dwelling itself is seen with a double file of rooms and cross gables of Queen Anne vintage front and back, dressed with tab shingles and containing windows at front with upper sash encircled by small panes of clear glass. There is a 1920s two-story frame wing attached against right gable, recessed from the main house elevation but on alignment with it at back.

The original structure has been thrown open on the ground story to one large room with stairs placed against the gable wall to the right and a new fireplace introduced at opposite gable served by an exterior brick chimney. The former interior chimney still survives in the attic, broadening as it mounts toward the roof. The

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ceilings are somewhat high on the first floor and the fenestration of good size reflecting the taste of the Greek Revival stylistic era, although otherwise there are no elements (now present) that express its motifs.

The entranceway is particularly plain, without even a transom. It currently wears a Georgian Revival frontispiece with broken pediment and is approached from a circular brick platform and steps.

As thus limited in space, houses of this genre had to, perforce, have a kitchen area. The cellar fireplace perhaps served this purpose, especially since the cellar is deeper than usually seen. However, other indications suggest the existence of an ell at northwest rear corner, which reached two stories and was added onto over time to extend entirely across the back wall. A step down from the front rooms on the upper story to this level, besides a change in the kind of wood used for flooring, lack of windows on one-third of the rear wall, and much shallower wall thickness itself all point in this direction. Additionally, there is a hint of of such an enlargement seen in the crawl space beyond the main block's foundation, which differs in joist direction from the crawlspace under the other rear rooms (where is also seen evidence of stairway to the cellar running parallel with house). The original cellar has been compartmentalized at its northerly gable end by means of a brick wall laid up entirely with stretchers. Its purpose is not clear, but doubtless indicating a greater use of the cellar at an earlier time. From this level it can be determined that the ground-story floorboards average about 9 inches.

In 1865 Julia Onderdonk and her husband Taylor Mount bought the dwelling from her father Lewis and ran the farm, which was reported with a successful operation in an inventory of 1869 after Lewis died. Between 1869 and 1909, the farm had two new owners, W.W. Henderson for about 8 years, followed by Jacob T.B. Veghte, long-time occupant, responsible for the Queen Anne features.

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5. ONDERDONK/BONHAM HOUSE pre-1850; 1870s Contributing  
Block 795.1, Lot 5.03: 730 River Road (Photo #s 28, 29, 30)

Believed to have been brought to present form in the third quarter of the 19th century this handsome large residence speaks in Italianate idiom and has, thanks to a former artist-owner, been painted in appropriate period color, with the applied ornamentation of panels on fascia--between paired consoles--picked out in complementary colors. A sawtooth trim also stands out. The house makes its stylish statement as though newly unveiled. It appears, however, to have incorporated an earlier building, and deed searching of 1845 found the property described as "a certain house..." and its existence is indicated on a map of 1850. The Federal Census of that year lists two "Negroes" in occupancy, making one believe that this could have been intended for farmhands.

The house today is a large rectangular block of 2 1/2 stories with front and rear cross gables, and paired chimneys in one gable, a solitary chimney in the other. It has a southerly orientation,, thus turning one gable end to the road. This house is one of the few originally built on the opposite side of the road close to pasture land descending to river edge, even as the property, now but 2 acres, does today, surrounded by the Green Acres of Johnson Park. (Photo # 31) Against its other gable wall, a much lower one and 3/4 story unit of single depth is attached, used as kitchen wing for the main block, with former summer kitchen in lean-to at its side, making the wing flush with the opposite roadside elevation of the house. The upper story has squat 3-pane windows.

An elegant pair of doors with raised and recessed cut-corner panels, heavily decorated and trimmed with applied moldings, and seemingly original hardware including a bell pull mark the main entrance beneath a broad two-pane transom. The fenestration of five bays on long elevations and two on gables is marked by Italianate projecting cornices on tab brackets above large 2/2 sash windows. Louvered blinds hang on some windows. Attic windows are

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round-headed with hood molding.

Presently, the floor plan is based on a through center hall of 7 1/2 feet width, in which the open-well staircase takes a single run to upper hall, with railing continuing over the well. The large well-turned newel and slender turned balusters reflect the style of the era. (Photo # 30)

A former 3-bay porch, c. 1900, in front of the main (south) facade has been partly enclosed following an outward extension of a room adjoining the wing by removal of the exterior wall to create the effect of a bay window. To left of porch (southwestward) is the entrance to the a small cellar. It runs parallel with house wall with steps leading to the space below the porch from which a 90 degree turn provides admittance through an opening in a stone foundation wall.

This cellar is room-size, with four stone rubble foundation walls. (Photo # 29) This gives rise to some speculation about the existence of a one-over-one dwelling originally here, which was later incorporated into the present house. From this cellar a crawlspace can be seen below just one room. The joist system is of sawn timbers and must represent a replacement. There are no chimney bases, except perhaps one (of solid brick) for the present flue, which rises to the sole chimney stack on the rear gable elevation. Although the explanation does not come to hand, there is some reason for an internally positioned run of stone steps adjacent to the brick chimney which would exit (now closed off) into the rear kitchen wing on its common wall with the main block.

Above this cellar space is the enlarged front room. In it can be seen wider floorboards than elsewhere in the house. The room above it on the second story strangely drops below hall floor level by a small stepdown. However, the room behind it on this side of the hall does not. This has raised questions about the incorporation of a one-over-one building of earlier existence and does explain these findings, but one-over-one dwellings are not come upon in

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this area.

There are four spacious rooms to a floor, each about 15 feet square, several with fireplaces wearing Greek Revival mantelpieces. Floorboards are fairly uniform throughout the house, about 7-8 inches wide. Doors also follow a general pattern of four recessed panels, sometimes finished on both faces, sometimes with flush back. All mantelpieces are shallow, not meant for wood fires, and have broad plain friezes in Greek Revival style with surround slightly arched over firebox, hinting at the incoming style.

The lower wing has become modernized for today's kitchen living, and the adjoining flat-roofed shed, formerly a summer kitchen, has been converted into utility room and bath.

When John Onderdonk, widower, was in his seventies, he arranged to dispose of his home plantation by selling it to his sons. Lewis and Isaac received the home plantation (Sites 3 and 4) and son Peter this property of 6 acres in 1854. Peter already resided in New Brunswick and was soon to be elected mayor. (With a partner, he later took over the Goodyear Rubber Company business.) He sold this unneeded farm the next year to Rebecca and Andrew Miller, who sold it to James Morrison, who suddenly was appointed special guardian for infant children of his brother, who then sold it to Daniel Bonham in 1866, after the end of the Civil War.

In Bonham's ownership it became known as the celery/asparagus farm. The path to his barn, no longer extant, became known as "Bonham's Lane" when trolley lines were introduced along River Road and a transfer point established on the farm, although Bonham had died in 1901 and his widow had moved away after renting the farm--by an unplanned historical twist--to Elwood Onderdonk, a great-grandson of John, original owner. Elwood remained for a few years and then removed to the ancestral homestead across the road. (Site # 3).

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5. RICHARD R. FIELD, JR. HOUSE, c. 1832 Contributing  
Block 782, Lot 1.01 & 1.02: 771 River Road (Photo #s 32,33)

Another house along River Road closer to the Raritan Landing, identified with Richard R. Field, Jr., was perhaps built just as the Delaware and Raritan Canal was halfway to completion, the impact of which was soon to be felt on the opposite side of the river. Like its predecessors, this house also has its gable end to road, its main facade facing southerly. A barn on the property, which was taken down some years ago and sold, was found to have the date 1832 on a timber, thus supplying a possible date for the house.

This is a rectangular, two-room-deep, two-story dwelling of vernacular styling, with a four-bay rather than symmetrical center hall plan of five bays. To its side away from the river, recessed against gable wall, is a one-and-a-half-story wing containing an enormous cooking hearth. The wing now incorporates a small lateral extension at its gable end. (PHoto # 33)

The building is of frame, with clapboards of various widths, cornerboards, and a low foundation of stone blocks and rubble. Internal end chimneys have brick stacks. There is an architrave/frieze spanning almost the whole elevation, overhanging eaves, and boxed cornice. Windows are large, with 6/6 sash and were louvered blinds. The front entrance, in third bay from left, has a door of Italianate origins, with round-headed upper panels over rectangular lower panels, outlined by heavy molding. The original large boxlock, with key, remains. A shed-roofed porch with slender plain posts fronts the entrance.

The floor plan was based on four rooms with staircase in rear compartment. The stair balustrade and newel post are Greek-Revival-inspired. The stairs advance in one run to a crowded narrow landing with dropped window, and continue with second run, turned 90 degrees. The attic stairs follow the same course above, squeezing under the rafters.

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The basic stylistic theme is Greek Revival. There are three fireplace mantels expressing its ethos of wide plain frieze. Most doors have the paired vertical-panel style adopted from Greek temples and made known through pattern books. Window enframement is simple, with wide-lipped sill and short apron. Floorboards are a consistent width of 8-9 inches.

There are two wide flat-headed archways, one into the living room and another into the room behind it. These rooms still reflect the Dutch disposition of space. There has been some alteration of spatial area of the other pair of rooms in order to enlarge the rear room as kitchen and pantry. A chimney was centered on the gable wall at one time, although there are no fireplace openings now. It appears that the chimney, which has a base in the cellar (similar to the bases on the opposing gable wall chimneys) is now used for heating flue and has been reconstructed in attic and on roof. (Bases in cellar are of stone piers with log lintel. At the time of construction, shelves were included within arch and between the two bases.)

The joists in the cellar are sawn for the most part and not widely separated, but there are hewn timbers as well. A great summer beam runs below room divisions and indicates the enframement for the stair compartment. A cellar was excavated under the original wing as well, and it is here that the large cooking fireplace base is seen along with wide boards used for hearth support.

The wing was enlarged longitudinally from one room to two rooms, as indicated by the location of the chimney stack as well as by a change in foundation fabric and joists. A seaming of the exterior wall also indicates this.

The wing has a porch at front under shed roof. There are three small windows on the upper story of its main facade. At its extended gable end, it has a pair of sash windows above, and at ground level small double windows and a shed-roofed entry. Behind the house there is a cistern now covered over by a new

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recreational deck.

### Outbuildings

### Contributing

A somewhat odd conglomeration of parts to create an outbuilding of two sections located a short distance back of the wing is considered contributing as it was probably assembled late in the 19th century and functioned during the period of significance. It holds interest in its makeshift construction and its incorporation of a board once part of the Central Railroad property, with the railroad's name clearly painted on it. One section serves as a workshop, the other as garage.

### Large barn

### Non-contributing

One-story barn of multiple bays partly built of modern materials located at back of property.

7. MATTHIAS SMOCK HOUSE, 1720; 1775-1800 On National Register 1973  
Block 833.1, lot 1: 851 River Road  
(Photo #s 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40) HABS NJ 478

The earliest dwelling house still extant on Raritan River Road is the Dutch frame house built by Matthias Smock, who is said to have purchased his land c. 1718.

This is a one-and-a-half-story, 2-room-deep structure, facing southwesterly with gable end to road, comprised of two units on alignment, the earlier to left (west) consisting of double file of rooms with cater-cornered chimneys back to back and side hallway of 7'9" width, which does not run through to back, though doubtless originally did so. This section has 9/6 windows on ground floor, and no windows originally for loft area but now has oddly placed small rectangular openings close to floor, one on principal facade, two on rear facade. Shutters of two sunk panels are found on windows. Owners this century added three pedimented dormers on the

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roof, front and rear. The roof has wooden shingles. Eaves make a slight return. Rain gutters are of wood.

The addition is one step upward from hall, and change of floor level is clearly seen on facade. Windows are of larger size, filled with 6/6 sash. It also has two rooms of similar proportions, the larger in front. A gable-end chimney appears to have served both the front room and a kitchen lean-to. Remaining as one of the mysteries of the past is the lack of a regular chimney base within the cellar, with but a slight monolithic projection. The chimney now faces into the kitchen. A single run of stairs is situated at its side wall in dining room, beginning at a passageway between kitchen and room. Possibly it once began with winders facing into the latter room. Interestingly, there is a full, broad stone foundation under the kitchen leanto, sharing a common wall with the main block but not excavated, and its joists run parallel with main elevations, which is perpendicular in direction to the beams under the main block. This manner of construction is not infrequently come upon in 18th-century houses of this area. Extending beyond the leanto is an early milk room of stone construction under a shed roof.

There is a cellar under the newer section of the house, reached by stone steps, having once had a bulkhead entrance but now incorporated into the kitchen lean-to at its rear wall next to the milk room. The original house unit had no cellar but can now be seen through an opening in the foundation wall. Bases for corner fireplaces can be detected and six hewn beams (not half trees) spaced at a guess about 42" on center. Overall dimensions of the house proper are 52'7" broad by 27 feet deep.

The corner fireplace in the dwelling room has chimney breast paneling (photo # 35), which is a reconstruction based on evidence of original treatment. The mantelpiece in the back room replaces one of Greek Revival style. Hewn oak beams 5" by 6" are exposed in the west rooms, spaced about 37" on center. (Photo # 35) The interstices between posts of bent frame are filled with clay and

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straw (Photo # 36) Surviving doors are six-paneled. Floorboards are approximately 9" wide, probably a replacement.

The staircase of single run originates near the off-center front entrance and displays Greek Revival styling. The raised-panel door itself is a replacement for a Greek-paneled door.

Such changes as were necessary or represented restoration activities, carried out with a professional consultant, were fully stated with the nomination at the time the Matthias Smock House was placed on both Registers of Historic Places.

### Outbuildings

### Contributing

Outbuildings were not included with the original submittal. This house more than many others has kept its outbuildings.

Early Smoke House, considered rare. Constructed of wide boards from sawn trees and adzed posts. Stands near kitchen lean-to. Used today as storage shed, it has been raised from grade for preservation purposes and given a window. Replacement hinges on door are Dutch-strap style. (Photo #s 37, 38)

Carriage House. Faces southerly. Now converted to a 2-bay garage. It is clapboarded. Small extension on east long wall near front gable end and pedestrian doorway on opposite wall. (Photo # 39)

Well house. At distance from house and sheathed in board and batten, it probably represents a second well for field purposes. (Photo # 40)

8. JONATHAN SMOCK HOUSE c. 1850s, earlier section Contributing  
Block 833.3, lot 10: 871 River Road (Photo #s 41, 42, 43)

A house of mid-19th century that appears to have been built onto an earlier small two-story gable-roofed unit, now positioned at rear of main block, oriented southward.

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The main dwelling itself faces westward to the road near a relatively deep curve and has a medium setback. To its right flows McEtis Brook in a ravine, continuing under a stone-arched bridge to the Raritan.

The large cross-gabled main block wears Italianate detailing. Its is sided with narrow clapboards, edged with cornerboards. However, the siding at rear is of wider boards and perhaps represents a survival from a somewhat earlier building, since the window sash here is 9/6. The high foundation is cemented.

The main building has a large footprint, almost square, representing a floor plan of hall plus double file of rooms to each side. It is 5 bays wide and 3 deep, with centered front entry, above which is a 3-pane transom. The door opening itself is surprisingly narrow; the door is Victorian-paneled with molding trim. There is a second entry on the southerly gable wall. Fenestration is of large 2/2 sash surmounted by molded cornices. On the rear elevation, first floor, the windows have 9/6 sash, as mentioned above. A round-headed (Roman) window of 2/2 panes is positioned in the front cross gable, and a flat-headed sash window in the other. On north gable wall is a four-sided bay window flanked by two windows of 2/2 sash. Windows have both recessed panel shutters and movable louvered blinds.

The roof is slate-shingled. Boxed eaves overhang. Large individual consoles bracket the fascia. Chimneys within gable walls emerge with small corbelled brick stacks.

A late-century wraparound porch to right (southeastward) has Tuscan columns, triple-grouped at the corners. The railing is composed of closely spaced square spindles. The porch is open at its terminus on the side wall, with steps approaching it from the rear. The cellar entrance is found at southeasterly corner of rear elevation. Bulkhead doors covering stone steps have strap hinges.

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The earlier unit serving as ell is centered on the rear of the main block. It has broader clapboards than those of the house it adjoins. It is one-and-a-half stories tall, 2 bays wide, and 2 bays deep on gable end (one a door opening) and windows are of 6/6 sash. Upper story has small windows, some "eyebrow" size. A tall brick chimney stack occupies internal gable end position. A large hood extends from the front wall shielding the bulkhead entrance of the main house. Former main facade has two windows but no entrance. On the opposite long wall is a shed-roofed addition of 3 bays. The interior has large exposed beams (joists).

### Outbuilding

Contributing

Late-century barn of one-story height with gable end facing southwardly, filled with track doors. (Photo # 43) Toward back of west-turned side wall is a projection of shallow depth under continuation of roof line. Barn is sheathed in narrow clapboards.

9. SMOCK/VOORHEES HOUSE post-1865; earlier section Contributing  
Block 835, lot 1.1: 899 River Road (Photo #s 44, 45)

A large frame two-story house presently of cross floor plan, originally of block and T-ell plan. Two-story gable-fronted 2-bay-wide addition centered on principal facade of main block over crawlspace at later time, creating present configuration. This addition is flanked either side by shallow shed-roofed porches against bay-wide wall, with entrance to main block off each porch, the larger porch to right signifying front entrance. Both porch roofs carry down-slope a blank-wall projection from the main block. The main block is 2-bays deep with internal end chimneys with corbelled brick stacks, and has large windows of 6/6 sash with movable louvered blinds. The west gable wall has been broken open to accommodate a five-sided bay window with full-length multipaned fixed sash, under flat roof, with projecting molded cornice. Siding is of clapboards of two widths, wider on rear elevation, with corner boards. Relatively low foundation has been concreted.

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The rear ell has no visible foundation. Its flooring rests on bark-clad half logs. It is sheathed with the wider clapboards seen on the rear of the main block. Windows, however, in some instances, have 9/6 sash (6/6 upper story, also one larger window of 2/2 sash. Roof has a relatively steep pitch, perhaps suggesting its raising to create attic space. Two square windows of 6/6 sash provide fenestration at this level. An exterior stuccoed chimney rises at center of the gable wall. A small one-bay projection under a shed roof is found on the westerly wall; a shed-roofed semi-open porch extends from the opposite wall, meeting up with a story-and-a-half flat-roofed one-bay projection against the rear of the house which extends forward to the plane of the house's side elevation., doubtless a later addition judging by its clapboards. (Photo # 46) The open porch shelters an entry to the wing. Its side wall is enclosed but filled with banding of three 6/6 sash windows. The entire building appears to have been placed under one roof with somewhat extended eaves on all sides.

An interior examination conducted for the Middlesex County inventory of 1977-78 identified the original house as consisting of present stair hall, dining room, back parlor, and kitchen. A mantelpiece with dentil detail remains. The post-Civil War addition is in part identified by sawn joists.

This property has had an interesting history, being identified in the 18th century, and again by repurchase in 1796 with a man named Hendrick Smock. The latter is not the same Hendrick Smock who purchased property along River Road at the intersection of Hoes Lane from Vincent Rognion in 1727 and whose farm was subject to great devastation, and dwelling burnt, during a British Army incursion in 1777. A young man, John Voorhees, owned the farm at mid-century, and he was followed a Captain Samuel Bliss. About the same time, another member of the Bliss family married into one of the nearby families.

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### Outbuilding

Well house near kitchen door: it is of typical form, square shingled base with pyramidal shingled roof. Latticework enclosure currently replaced with vertical boards.

### Contributing

### 10. STONE-ARCHED BRIDGE

Over McEtis Brook (Photo # 47)

### Contributing

It is not known when the brook obtained this name, the McEtis property not having been deed-searched, but originally this small run of water, if named at all, should have carried the Smock name. A deed of the 1790s for property alongside the brook belonging to the Smocks refers to the "small brook" in one boundary and land of Dennis Smock. Its age is too early to be recorded in current files maintained by the county's engineers.

The stones used in its construction, quite visible on the river side from the meadows, are large and nicely coursed, with rough faces. A semicircular vault holds them in place. This is constructed of smaller stones set soldier fashion at the rim. To the right, southeastward, there is an angled wing of similar stone construction. Although stones appear to be of approximately same size, it cannot be definitely concluded that it was part of original construction. The opposite end of the bridge has been repaired over time with coatings of cement, which obscure the stonework. There are no freeholders' and masons' names to be found on a tablet or incised into stone as seem on some bridges built in the 19th century. Given the ancient history of the road, the bridge could date to the 18th century.

### 11. JOHNSON PARK (segment) in GREEN ACRES

### Contributing

This represents the river lowland, original pasture, arable land, and flood plain, and incorporates a gift of several acres of land made by the late Dr. Walter C. Meuly from the Isaac Onderdonk Farm.

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This property, called Meuly's Woods, includes a pond that was left when the river changed its course at this place years ago. As maintained, visitors can walk to the river bank thus gaining a sense of of grazing fields of long ago. (See Addenda.) Johnson Park originates to southeast of Landing Lane and is maintained as a greensward and public park up to the vicinity of Hoes Lane (Photo # 1), where the museum of architectural examples of early buildings called East Jersey Olde Town is located. That part of the park included in the District begins a short distance beyond and is left in a natural state. Views of its border along River Road can be seen in photos numbered 10, 22, and 49.

12. Block 795.01, Lot 6.01. Vacant lot

13. Block 795.02, Lot 6.02. Vacant lot

14. RIVER ROAD (segment)

Contributing

River Road precedes the arrival of settlers, dating to the first years of the Proprietary government, under Governor Gawen Lawrie. In 1684 the road was ordered to be laid. Doubtless since then until now there have been some improvements in its course, straightening out too sharp bends, possibly adjusting it if flood waters came too close. There is no reason to believe that much change occurred, however, even if the Raritan River at one place (Meuly's woods, the pasture land for the Isaac Onderdonk Farm) formerly flowed closer to the road. Maps drawn in the 19th century, 1850-1876, show its path as it is today, even to some of its bends, notably one at McEtis Brook.

River Road remains two lanes wide, without paved shoulders. In this its country aspect has been preserved, especially since it is edged for the most part by shrubs, bushes, small stands of trees, or woods by small runs. It is undisturbed in a peaceful reverie of the past century because of the minimum number of buildings, all domestic, with only a handful on the river side.

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The Road up Raritan Historic District encompasses the remaining part of a predominantly Dutch agricultural community that existed in the middle of the 18th century along the north side of the Raritan River west of Raritan Landing. The road itself from its beginnings in 1684 was recognized as a major road in the Province of East New Jersey. Through the 18th century and into the first third of the 19th century, the road met expectations in becoming a vital transportation route from central New Jersey inland farms to the shipping center at the Landing from which ships sailed to both domestic and foreign ports. As a major road, it was mapped by military surveyors and frequented in the course of the American Revolution, especially during 1777. The 19th century saw the same farms in production under descendants of the original settlers, who weathered the loss of the inland trade to canal and railroad and continued to thrive without need of activity at the Landing. Their prosperity is reflected in the improvement of ancestral homes and building of new residences, with renewed interest in housing during the Civil War era. The period of significance spans from the opening of the road to c. 1900, when the end of farming was forecast with the arrival of a trolley line along River Road. The Road up Raritan Historic District is significant under Criteria A and C, and potentially D as well.

This nomination encompasses a segment of River Road with historic structures remaining with sufficiently close proximity to each other in a complementary setting to convey the character of the riverside settlement from its first period of occupation through the 19th century when most of the properties still remained in the hands of descendants of original families. These buildings also broaden our knowledge of vernacular architecture and illustrate the various building styles that could exist within a time frame, reflecting cultural differences, wealth, ambition, and sophistication in this area, in particular, near the Raritan Landing.

The road itself was one of the earliest inland roads in New Jersey, and its major roles in transportation and in military engagements are equally significant. The American Revolution was waged for seven months along the Raritan River in 1777 under the direct leadership of the military heads of both armies, the British by Lord Cornwallis and Lord Howe, and the Continentals by General Washington.

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Road up Raritan H.D.  
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1300MG*

There is a potential for archaeological military research because of the antiquity of the road and the frequency of military encounters during the Revolution, as also a brief encampment of the Continentals near the Onderdonk farms after the Battle of Monmouth. There is also very likely some evidence of Indian occupancy before 1600.

The Road up Raritan District is significant on four important levels: settlement, transportation, architecture, and major military role in the American Revolution. The name recalls the name given the road from earliest times, documented in road records.

This District supplements what are already recognized as individually contributing historic buildings along the Raritan River Road in the Raritan Landing community. It adds to knowledge of a very early settlement whose economy was based on mercantile activities carried out mainly by Dutch and English individuals who had come from New York. The commercial community was lively, served by joiners, shoemakers, carpenters, bakers, storehouse keepers, shops, and barracks. It was backed up by local yeomen, Dutch and Huguenot, who established river plantations to the northwestward of the Landing as far as the next early village of Bound Brook just over the border in Somerset County. The District records that segment of the road where these farms have survived with buildings.

Road of History

In 1683, Middlesex was created as a county, consisting of the two early towns of Woodbridge and Piscataway. That was the year that a proprietary government was set up for the newly acquired Province of East New Jersey. An Act of Assembly was passed that same year for "making and settling of highways, passages, landings, bridges, and ferries within this province." (1) Drawing upon this act, Deputy Governor Gawen Lawrie (1684-86) and other officials appointed for laying out highways, on June 28, 1684, "marked and laid out the wayes as follows:

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On from John White's plantation on Raritan River [Bridgewater, Somerset County, to west of today's FINDERNE] along upon a ridge of upland on or near the old Indian path to the north side of Capt. [Thomas] Codrington's [a Proprietor who settled on his tract west of Bound Brook], and thence all the meadows down to Maj. James Gyles' [in Piscataway, quite possibly in District] at which place there is to be a bridge for horse and waggon; from there to along the upland near the meadows on Raritan River to Bellows plantation, and through his corn-field as the trees are marked: from thence to Aaron Jacob's through his field, his house being in the middle of the highway as the trees are marked; from thence by marked trees to Vincent Rungimone's [Runyon] land [near Hoes Lane] and it is agreed that there should be a footway elevated along Raritan riverside through the long meadow, continued to Capt. Codrington's and upward, and the marked trees there down to the river, the highway to be taken one-half out of Hopewell Hull's lott and the other halfe out of Vincent's lot, being in all one hundred feet in breadth; and from Vincent's by the line of marked trees to Capt. Greenland[']s [plantation located between Raritan Landing and Highland Park]; from thence in the old road to Piscataway[town]... [Route 27]. (2)

This document was the authorization to lay out and establish the Road up Raritan.

In 1704, the width of the road was officially set and confirmed at 6 rods under an act of the General Assembly to conform with New Jersey Law established the year before. (3) Such a width (99 feet) was only given "Great Roads" on which much travel was anticipated and would allow for drovers moving their herds along, and for passing lanes especially when the road was rutted.

The early action in calling for a road up the Raritan was based on recognition of the necessity of having a land route to the interior of the province,, and later on for inland trade from the "great wheat country" mentioned in every advertisement, to reach a market.

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Settlement along the river by Lowlanders--the term encompasses the nationals of Flanders and the Netherlands, the French Huguenots, and German Palatines who emigrated at the same time from ports in Holland--occurred early in the history of New Jersey, shortly after the original lands under patents to East New Jersey Proprietors were made available. It was accommodated if not encouraged by the proclamation of a road policy that laid out a "road up Raritan" upon an Indian trail as east-west route to depart from the first major "highway" running north and south from Elizabethtown to Delaware Falls (Trenton), the Upper Indian Trail, in existence as early as 1675. (4)

To this day, few roads depart from River Road to the interior. Beaten paths to reach the few places of importance to settlers preceded the two roads laid out before 1800. In 1735, Metlars Lane, called an "old beaten road," was officially opened as a northward route from the Road up Raritan to provide a better means to reach Dunham's Mill on Ambrose Brook at a central interior location. Still in use today, it traveled between warehouses and house lots on Raritan Landing up to "the road which leads up Raritan" to branch off between Peter Bodine's and Evert Duyckinck's on River Road, located about a quarter mile eastward of Raritan Landing. In 1739 the next road westward, Hoes Lane, was ordered "for want of a road to a market," to be laid out from the "Great Road which leads up Raritan" between Hendrick Smock's and Charles Suydam's, to proceed northward and to connect with the same Ambrose Brook at a more westerly location by a bridge. (5) This road helps to place Hendrick Smock's plantation, once Vincent Runyon's location. The Smock family was one of the three important landholders whose farmhouses have survived and are included in the District. The buildings of Suydam, the miller, on the opposite side of Hoes Lane have been lost.

These early road descriptions of new routes indicate the common name given by the settlers for their main road along the river.

Known and mapped as a major highway during the Revolutionary War period (see Addenda), it was a road clearly available to armies during the British occupation of New Brunswick, when Washington was encamped at Camp Middlebrook in the Watchung Hills back of the Raritan River communities.

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It is claimed that the decade 1740-50 saw the peak of activity at the Raritan Landing. Properties throughout central New Jersey when advertised for sale often contained references to the roads leading to the Landing, which was always mentioned as in good traveling distance. Shipping of products from inland farms remained an important commerce into the early decades of the 19th century.

Oldtimers set the volume of travel on the Road up Raritan as up to 500 teams of horses, with four to six animals, passing through each day in harvesting seasons, bringing produce from western New Jersey and Pennsylvania. (5) It was reported that teams were lined up for a full mile waiting to be unloaded of their cargo, including grain, flour, ships' bread, cooper's stock, dressed hogs and steers. An estimate was made that fully 400 tons of products to be shipped could appear in a day, requiring about 10 sloops to handle the cargo. Part of the trade was with the West Indies. (6)

### Earliest Settlement

The small farms permitted by 17th century policy to town residents before the takeover by the Board of Proprietors were in contrast to the river mansions and plantations earlier established outward from Perth Amboy, the Province's capital at the river's mouth. It was in Piscataway Township that an early commingling of nationalities and economic pursuits occurred, as one class of Dutchmen, city merchants, joined with privileged Englishmen in taking advantage of river trade and shipping of inland goods to far places, and another class of Lowlanders, primarily yeoman farmers, formed a useful relationship in populating and cultivating the land.

Under the Proprietors' policy to encourage settlement, patents were granted rather randomly to shareholders in the Province, and great tracts of land were accumulated by some. Benjamin Clark, for one, took possession of large areas of river frontage, and appears to have been one of the major sellers of farm tracts to incoming settlers. Clark brought over eight servants from Europe in 1683/4 and then claimed headland for himself and his men. He had obtained

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from his father, a resident of Perth Amboy, the use of Proprietary patents, with other shares obtained from Peter Sonmans, one of the greatest landholders of all through inheritance from his father Arent, a Proprietor, and as agent for the Proprietors living in England.

The earliest records of land ownership beyond the borders of the village of Piscatawaytown appear in the Calendar of Deeds of New Jersey Colonial Documents (Archives series) even before the 1682 takeover of the eastern province by the Proprietors. Among others, Dr. Henry Greenland, physician and keeper of an ordinary, had taken up his site eastward of the later Landing by 1677, having a few nearby Indians at his service. In 1679/80, Rene Piat (alias La Fleur) was sold 55 acres on the river, with landowner Vincent Runyon on the west, presumably at Hoes Lane location. (His farm was sold in 1723 to Hendrick Smock, mentioned above.) Runyon, who arrived in 1677, was described as a carpenter in another deed of 1680 to Thomas Fitzrandolph, weaver, for two small "house lots" on the river. The Gyles, Matthew and son James, neighbored each other with farms of 100 to 120 acres, their deeds recorded in 1688. Eliahim Fullerton sold to Robert Fullerton in 1684/5 104 acres alongside a small brook (McEtis Brook), with Benjah Dunham on the southeast. This same tract later belonged to the important Smock family. (8) As previously noted, the Road up Raritan was laid out across their lands.

These are the names of families who remained on in Piscataway Township and largely populated it. Some of these men had been part of the Piscatawaytown settlement preceding the Proprietors' takeover; some had come from Cape Cod, Plymouth, and Boston; Baptists had come from Rhode Island. Others, though, with crafts and building skills, may well have come as indentured servants as part of the Proprietors' plan to establish self-sufficient manor plantations, to encourage settlement of lands not taken up. Other names of original settlers, such as William Olden and Joseph Worth, were later found as first settlers of the Stony Brook community (later Princeton).

Among the newcomers was the Field family. All told, they obtained through several purchases, more than a thousand acres and settled at the far end of River Road in Piscataway near the Bound Brook in

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1692, an area for the most part beyond the District. One pioneer home with a datestone of 1710 was demolished in 1907 for an apartment building. Two of the family's early homesteads survive, however; one dated about 1750 that stands along River Road is one-half mile northwest of the District. John Field's house (# 1), however, stands within the District. Its datestone reads 1743. (Photo # 3) Other houses of later generations of Fields are at sites #s 2 and 6.

In the 1690s, the tracts on the far (south) side of the river--also called "Rariton Lotts"--were disposed of through patents and early sales with no settlement yet under way except at New Brunswick, where John Inians, a great landholder, had established a ferry service to accommodate the handful of travelers on the Upper Indian Trail from Elizabethtown to the Delaware (Route 27). More or less opposite him, on a plantation between the Landing and New Brunswick, was Dr. Henry Greenland, who was observed in 1679 by traveling Dutch of the Labadist cult to be living alone in the wilderness. Greenland's tract, mentioned in the road's opening, lay to the east of the District.

The siting of dwellings close to an existing road seems to be a characteristic of Piscataway Township. With the Province's capital in Perth Amboy at the mouth of the Raritan River, it probably explains in part the taking up of land for river plantations by the wealthy before major settlement west of New Brunswick occurred. One of these wealthy men was Samuel Moore of Woodbridge, who mentioned he had a "mansion house" called "Non Such" in rental in 1687. Doubtless the Proprietors and early land investors encouraged newcomers to take advantage both of the beauty of the river and the mercantile potential. There was in 1710 a Piscataway(town) Landing east of the ferry crossing established at New Brunswick in 1686 by John Inians. A second shipping landing--later called Raritan Landing--was begun at the end of tidewater where shoals or falls were encountered a little northwest of Inians' ferry in 1719 by Adolphus Hardenbrook, who put up the first warehouse. It has been suggested that Cornelius Low's prominent father-in-law Isaac Gouverneur provided some backing for its development. (9)

This appears to have encouraged the Dutch merchants and Lowlanders of the New York area to follow him in short order, men with names such as Roosevelt, Beekman, Van Voorhees, Lane, Ten Broeck,

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Bodine, Duyckinck, Vroom, Dumont. Life centered about the Raritan Landing as time passed. Considerable wealth accrued to these entrepreneurs, and mansions were erected by men such as Edward Antill and Anthony White (Buccleuch) about 1739. Antill and White were married to daughters of Governor Morris.

There grew up, side by side, two communities that functioned as one. In the immediate vicinity of the Landing were the owners of the warehouses, the merchants, and the usual auxiliary services. The well-to do and otherwise high-placed had their "mansion houses" to the east of the Landing and near the highway between Elizabethtown and Trenton.

Andrew Burnaby noted in his Travels through the Middle Settlements in North-America in 1759 and 1760 that "up the Raritan," the county was exceedingly rich and beautiful, the river bank covered with gentlemen's houses, one containing some good portraits by Van Dyck, the noted Dutch painter.

A survey of real estate advertisements of the first half of the 18th century found that the homes of prominent individuals were exceptional in size flanked by several outbuildings. Buildings reported available in real estate advertisements included a 2-story stable, bark mill, grist mill, bolting house, dwelling houses with cellars, four rooms to a floor, and two to five fireplaces. Walter Livingston listed his house with a 12-foot entry through; divided cellar and coach house and brew house. Edward Antill had besides his early Georgian house a coach house, fowl house, and brew house. James Hutchins advertised in 1745 his two houses, one of three stories "two miles from New Brunswick." (10) .

The other community was that of yeoman farmer--those Lowlanders who came from Long Island and took up lands upriver from the Landing as far as the vast acreage fronting on the river previously claimed by John Field, an Englishman of Flushing, Long Island. They became, in the end, the stable community that sank their roots in the District.

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### Architectural Diversity in Vernacular Building

Along this river road from Bound Brook to New Brunswick were found examples of buildings in the style of Englishman farmer, Lowlander farmer, New York Dutch merchant, and prominent English land investor. Ross Hall, Antill's home on 360 acres, was of brick, 56 by 42 feet, with four rooms on each floor level, and 12-foot ceilings. Walter Livingston's mansion had a 12-foot-wide center hall. Cornelius Low's still extant two-story stone-ashlar Georgian mansion, Ivy Hall, measures 50 by 40 feet, and it once had a separate 30 by 30-foot stone kitchen as well.

There was a contrast in living styles based on wealth and a degree of sophistication perhaps acquired in New York. While aware of the prestigious "mansion" houses of these neighbors, the settlers along the Road up Raritan followed their own yeoman traditions. Of the several original homes occupied by pioneer John Field and his sons, one alone survives. The Field family chose masonry rather than frame. Grandson John Field's house, built 1743 (Site # 1) perhaps reflects a "hall and parlor" floor plan brought by New Englanders to Long Island, though in Bergen County and in New York State (though not in this area) Dutch houses can be seen that consist of two or more single-depth laterally added rooms. The dwelling is noteworthy for its single file of rooms and small size considering the many years the Field family had been living in Piscataway. This story-and-a-half fieldstone structure has no fenestration on the rear wall, but has one exterior doorway per room. Since the original end room is under repair, it is possible to see all the components of construction as well as methods employed. This simple dwelling, most of all, serves to call to mind the origins of the community. Built for a man of English background, it may inform as to the commingling of cultures, since the other two 18th-century dwellings were built by people of Lowlander nationality.

Homes of other settlers prior to 1700--the Englishmen Matthew and James Giles, father and son, and Huguenots Vincent Rognion (Runyon) and Rene Piat have vanished. The surviving dwellings of Lowlander yeomen have dwindled to two, the Matthias Smock House, c. 1720, and the Isaac Onderdonk House, c. 1750 (both already on

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State and National Registers). These are interesting in being representative of the form followed in central New Jersey by Dutchmen who had emigrated from Long Island Dutch communities. They have, typically, a double file of rooms, the smaller in back. The Dutch dwelling of this region might have originated with just the basic unit, perhaps with a side hall, and were expanded with an additional unit resulting in a 5-bay center hall plan. Such houses as these stood 1-1/2 stories tall, without fenestration for the garret, except perhaps an opening in one gable. The earliest sometimes included the cooking fireplace within one of the rooms. Somewhat later, the kitchen was separate but perhaps adjoining.

The Onderdonk and Smock houses both have back-to-back corner fireplaces in their earliest units, which in both instances were built with side halls containing a flight of stairs to the garret. The Smock House (c. 1720) has no cellar under the initial unit, but it seems that cellars were uncommon, at least "under the whole," until about mid-century, going by real estate advertisements. In contrast, the John Field House (1743) does have a cellar under its northeasterly room, but the cooking fireplace with bake oven is in the next room (beehive missing, and chimney closed off) which lacks a cellar.

In dimensions and construction techniques these two houses are also typical of Dutch cultural mores. The Dutch system of framing by bents is not visible now except for the "anchoring" second-floor joists, which are hewn and of large proportions, fairly widely spaced. In each case, the additions reflect a later period in their larger windows and change in moldings. The typical Dutch strap hinges are found in use in both houses. The Onderdonk House evolved over time into a two-story residence, as sometimes happened, as seen in the Jacques Duryea house, "Washington Well Farm," in nearby Montgomery Township, Somerset County. Just across the Raritan from Matthias Smock, at Smock's Ford (see map in Addenda) in Franklin Township, Somerset County, is the early Dutch home of Symen Van Wickle, c. 1730, whose evolution--not upward but outward--has been documented by HABS.

Pitched gable roofs have been the commonplace in central New Jersey areas settled by the Dutch, with occasional bell eaves or "kicks"

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on early houses, but there is some suggestion that non-Dutch residences of the colonial era also had English gambrel roofs by mid 18th-century: Ross Hall for one, the Dunn House of interior Piscataway, for another. Familiar building styles seem to have prevailed despite the knowledge of forms used by other nationalities.

After 1800 vernacular expressions of background and even regional taste gave way to national styles. The Federal which became the Greek Revival by slight alterations to the basic rectangular box is represented by the Field/Dunham House (# 2) and Richard Field, Jr. House (# 6). The latter house is four bays wide rather than symmetrical, with side wing (which could be older). The Dunham House, too, began as four-bay but became five with a later extension. The latter conceals its kitchen wing at rear, under which is a root cellar, an unusual feature. There was never more than a cellar under one room of the main block, and perhaps even that was excavated later.

Another residence in the District has a unique history not yet revealed. Site # 4 was erected on Isaac Onderdonk's ancestral farm when owned by his grandson John B. Onderdonk about mid-19th century just the other side of a run of water. It began as an I-form structure of two rooms, with center entrance, constructed in brick, a stylish fabric for the time and not in general use in these parts. It became officially the home of his married son Lewis in 1854, when he reserved the ancestral home for himself (one rear room) and an unmarried son Isaac by a division and sale of his property. Third son Peter already had received lands, so was offered only the six-acre tract across the road (# 5) which he immediately sold. The Lewis Onderdonk House would have occupied a place of distinction on the landscape as did the few other brick masonry houses in Somerset, built about the same time by members of the Staats family. It had a full high-ceilinged cellar (photo #s 24, 25) in which was a usable fireplace for cooking or washing purposes, one-of-a-kind in this vicinity and infrequently found in the Dutch-occupied Raritan Valley.

The house (# 5) that eventually enveloped an earlier stone foundation (photo # 29) and its one-room above-ground building never had its own cellar, another surprising fact since the

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foundation itself for this impressively scaled Italianate house is of brick, and was raised at a time when most houses had cellars. It is as though local custom in this community found no need for such space.

Few outbuildings have survived, doubtless because the original farms have been much reduced in size this century after family ownership ceased and farming itself declined. There is, however, one rare building, a smoke house (photo #s 37, 38), which shows early construction and has been subject to very little change except insertion of a window and replacement of a door. At this same Matthias Smock property there is a milk room attached to the kitchen (former lean-to, summer kitchen) of the house, next to the exterior cellar steps, another rarity of sorts in this Dutch area, but perhaps not for English, as the Runyon House (on the Registers) of 18th-century Piscataway (now in Edison) also had one.

The original farms were divided and willed to children as the pioneers aged before the century ended, and a second land division occurred again in the following century as the next generation passed mid-life and gave up active farming. The remaining three houses in the District also date in their final appearance to the second half of the 19th century and reflect the prosperity during and after the Civil War period for descendants of the settlers still given to agricultural pursuits on homestead properties. The favored style was Italianate, with the Gothic cross gable, and updates in Queen Anne. The most handsome of these is the Onderdonk/Bonham House (# 5) with ornamented fascia and window cornices. All three of these buildings appear to have incorporated in one fashion or another an older structure on the site. The Johnathan Smock House (# 8) which relates to a land division of 1854, has a two-room-deep ell at back, which reflects earlier construction styles and floor plan. The Smock/ (John) Voorhees House, named after its owner in 1850, as shown on a county map, doubtless consisted of block and wing plan, possibly developed from a house erected earlier in the century. Today it is a considerably larger house because of an unusual late-century two-story front-gabled addition centered on the former principal elevation flanked by one-story shed-roofed side porches.

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All these houses, except possibly the Onderdonk/Bonham House, follow the post and frame form of Federal/Georgian style. The Onderdonk/Bonham House is of balloon construction, according to a former owner. Except as noted they are of two-story height (with attic gable windows), with internal end chimneys. All are double pile, with exceptions mentioned.

Between the last two residences flows McEtis Brook, which travels under the early undated stone-arched bridge (culvert) erected to carry early River Road. (Photo #s 47, 48)

### Role of Residents in Community and Nation

Viewed overall, the three dominant families of this landscape contributed in many ways to the township governing life in different periods of history, and the nation's military service at the time of the Revolution. If the particular resident in one of their extant houses included here was not such a participant, other family members were, though the homesteads have been lost to development. Of those directly associated with remaining homesteads, Isaac Onderdonk served as a private with state troops in the Revolution and was locally a road commissioner.

Jeremiah Field, father of John, was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1732; he and his son of the same name were in charge of highways during 1742-44. His son Michael established a mill near Bound Brook, which became nucleus for the village of Fieldville (today's Bound Brook Heights) and member of the Committee on Correspondence. He was a casualty of the Revolution. Another Jeremiah Field, a Lieutenant in the militia, also lost his life at the Battle of Monmouth. The Fields, in fact, held almost every prominent elective and appointive office available in the county. The pioneer John Field (died 1725) was road overseer in 1692 and again in 1697-8, and also a Justice of the Peace. (11)

The Smocks (early spelled Smack) arrived in Piscataway one by one shortly after 1700. Lucas Smock's name appears in 1705. The Smock name turns up widely in Piscataway Township in the second quarter of the 18th century. For that reason, given the Dutch pattern of

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nomenclature for children, it is not always possible to identify and place Smocks having the same given name. The progenitor of the family, Mathys H. Smock, was originally of Long Island. His son and namesake came to the Raritan about 1718, according to the family genealogy. His sons were Hendrick, Lucas, Johannes, Matthias, and Jacobus. Some of their names are soon found as young parents through records of the New Brunswick and Six-Mile-Run Dutch Churches. In 1729 Hendrick and Leonard Smock (uncle or cousin) signed the subscription list for a pastor for the Dutch church at 3-Mile-Run. Leonard (sometimes spelt Leendert) also served as highway surveyor during 1728/29. Hendrick was a freeholder in 1726 and again in 1748; he was deceased by 1754.

John Smock (1712-91) was a highway surveyor in 1745; town clerk in 1767. (12) John Smock, Jr., was a constable in 1767 and another Hendrick Smock, a highway overseer in 1766 and again in 1772. (13) His farm was at Hoes Lane and suffered great damage during the Revolution. Hendrick, his son (?), was a private in the Revolution. One of that name was also pound master in 1781. (14) Hendrick's dwelling house no longer stands and probably was near Hoes Lane judging by early references, but a portion of his large plantation falls within the District on the east side of McEtis Brook.

### River Road, Main Highway During Revolutionary War

The historian Richard McCormick has written of the impact of the outbreak of war on this riverside community.

The narrow tract of land between River Road and the Raritan River, extending from Landing Lane to Bound Brook, was among the earliest areas in New Jersey to be settled. For nearly three centuries its history has been a part of the larger history of the state and nation....For the most part its story is a tranquil one, but on one significant occasion, during the Revolutionary War, it was briefly caught up in the swirl of momentous developments and thus earned for itself an enduring place in the annals of our nation. (15)

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New Jersey has been called the "Cockpit of the Revolution." The Raritan and Millstone River valleys certainly have been at the center, judging by the number of incidents between armies over an extended period of time. The occupation of the area by the British called forth a defensive network to contain them, and this led to many foraging sorties and confrontations: both skirmishes and big battles with loss of life. Under Lord Charles Cornwallis, the British took up a position in New Brunswick in 1776, after pursuing Washington's Army thus far on the road to Trenton (Route 27), following defeats of the Continentals on Long Island and at Fort Mifflin. War came to Piscataway on December 1, 1776, when Cornwallis made New Brunswick his headquarters.

Army movements and engagements took place chiefly along River Road, from Bound Brook to Raritan Landing, main crossing to New Brunswick, outside as well as within the District. While the events hereinafter cited relate to the whole marching distance, the District alone serves to preserve the best record of the Revolution through its concentration of surviving buildings.

Cornwallis' army, reputedly of 17,000 men, included the following forces: The English Brigade under General Leslie stationed "on the plantations up to Raritan Landing." The English Guards Brigade cantoned at the Landing, and Chevalier Osborn (Col. Sir George Osborn, MP) with 300 grenadiers occupying the outlying houses along River Road up to Bound Brook. Captain Wreden and Col. Von Donop's Hessian Regiment of jaegers, which had two battalions of Hessians and the jagers, one battalion of grenadiers, one battalion of light infantry, and light horse, and 12 mounted jaegers under Captain Lorey, were stationed at a plantation on the road to Bound Brook in front of the English Grenadiers. (16) See maps also in Addenda.)

According to the diary and map of Hessian Johann Ewald, Captain Wreden's Hessian troops were located just adjacent to the District between the Great Road and the river across from the Rising Sun Tavern (approximately where Rutgers Stadium now stands), and Captain Lorey's Hessians were less than a mile west on Vincent Runyon's farm (Hoes Lane). Ewald himself was posted near the Smocks' farms just beyond. Ewald notes that there were almost daily skirmishes with American patrols all along River Road.

According to Ewald, "On January 13, 1777, the Americans visited us toward 10 o'clock in the evening. Their intention was to surprise my post nearby but since they were greeted by shots from all the sentries, they merely fired several hundred shots in the direction of our pickets' fire and withdrew." (17) On January 23, Col. Parker with the 6th Virginia and the local militia attacked a British

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foraging party near the Hendrick Smock House at Hoes Lane and routed them. The British lost 65, either killed or wounded. (18) At this time Suydam's mill was set afire and he and Smock suffered great losses. (See Addenda.)

An American soldier, Samuel Craig, also kept a diary during his time of service along River Road. Additional incidents between armies seemed to have taken place at Bound Brook. On January 23, he recorded, "This day about 10 or 11 o'clock, a small ingagement began at or near Baum [Bound] Brook with Cannon & Small arms which lasted for the space of an 1/2 an hour. When American Army made Britain glad for to retreat." Again on February 1: "At 2 o'clock began a hot ingagement at or near a place called Baumbrook, which consisted of field pieces & small arms which continued for the space of 26 minutes very smart. Our men was worsted for which I am sorry for to hear. Our army killed 3 to 1 but was obliged for to retreat because our enemies was reinforced." (19) Some of this action may have extended to the interior of the District, but if not--and who can know with a certainty--the engagement typified what the District residents had become familiar with and feared.

The scale of fighting along the road soon escalated, however, and on January 26 Ewald reported, "I received orders to be at the Landing bridge with fifty jagers before daybreak. There I found General Leslie, Colonel Donop, two hundred men of the light infantry, four hundred men of the English regiments, the Grenadier Battalion Linsing and fifty horses." This formidable force was ordered to forage toward Samptown (South Plainfield), where "a few men were killed and wounded on both sides." An even larger force (over 2,000 men under Cornwallis) set out from the Great Road on February 8 and took the road to Quibbletown where they engaged American troops in a series of fierce battles that lasted all day, in which, Ewald writes, "many brave men were lost." (20)

Since the Americans regarded the village of Bound Brook as a major ost, the British were determined to conduct a surprise attack on it. On April 13, 1777, their troops marched along the Great Road through the District to attack the Americans there under General Benjamin Lincoln. One historian reports that the British had 4000 soldiers on the march, originating in New Brunswick under Lord Cornwallis, with Von Donop commanding the Hessians: one battalion of grenadiers, one battalion of light infantry; a detachment of guards, the light horse, 2 battalions of Hessians and the jagers. (21)

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Ewald was there: "At three o'clock in the morning of the 13th, General [James] Grant marched on the road from Raritan Landing to Bound Brook...Lord Cornwallis ordered me to form the advanced guard of General Grant's column...At daybreak I came upon an enemy picket on this side of the stone causeway through a marsh along the Raritan River for 500 or 600 paces over two bridges [today's River Road between the Union Carbide plant and Lincoln Boulevard]." This attack resulted in a brief victory for the British at Bound Brook, for "the place was ransacked and plundered because all the inhabitants were rebellious-minded" (22), but they were attacked just east of the District on their way back.

Still another account was given by General Benjamin Lincoln himself. "I lost most of my baggage and papers. We had 500 men extended the distance of five or six miles. The enemy's forces were about 4000, with four or five general officers...The enemy returned to their quarters at Brunswick. We are within three or four miles of the enemy, and a good road between us [italics added]." (23) It may have been on this occasion when the British were overtaken at the Landing with loss of eight men and 16 others taken prisoner.

At Smock's Ford, where some Hessians were posted, revenge took form after newly arrived Major von Ottendorff, who came with Frenchmen to reinforce the Americans, prowled about at night on the opposite shore of the Raritan, fired some volleys across the river (but a hundred paces wide), killing several sentries. The Americans hid in the barn on the farm of the Rev. Abraham Beach, former minister of the Anglican Church in New Brunswick (Rutgers Preparatory School today). On April 28, Ewald set up an ambush in the night, putting an amulette (a French light, rifled field gun) behind a false hedge which he had fashioned from bushes. His men fired from behind this shield and dislodged the soldiers in the barn. Long rifles as well as cannon were used to wind up the harassment, with a loss of American life.

The last significant encounter between armies occurred again on the River Road and again in the vicinity of the Smock farms on June 1, when Col. Oliver Spencer marched a detachment down from the hills to meet a British force moving toward him. There were losses to both sides. Two weeks later the British evacuated the area. (24)

This was one of several engagements that occurred within and outside the District, but in every case the armies marched through on the road creating general havoc for the residents. As noted,

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the road was strategically important at that time to both armies for crossing the Raritan River over the Landing bridge to New Brunswick, British headquarters.

The following year when Independence Day approached, Washington had just brought his army back from the Battle of Monmouth to Raritan Landing to allow his weary men to relax and recover for a few days in the cooling river. When the second anniversary date of the Declaration of Independence arrived, it is reported that Washington himself led his assembled soldiers from the Landing over the bridge to New Brunswick, and lined up his men with cannon. At 5 p.m. on a signal given, 13 cannon were fired, followed by a running fire of musketry and artillery, concluding with three huzzas "to the perpetual and undisturbed Independence of the United States of America." (25)

When the American Revolution began, Raritan Landing was a prosperous village, with merchant warehouses and homes, nearby grist mills, and the Rising Sun Tavern. After the period of occupancy ended, aside from considerable loss of life, there was great property loss as well. An observer wrote in a letter to the newspapers dated May 24, 1777: "You would hardly know the Landing. Not a panel of fence left standing in a mile. All wheat fields open, some houses burnt down, some pulled down and burnt." (26)

Reparation claims for losses suffered by actions of both armies were submitted but never paid. As examples, though just beyond the east edge of the District, Charles Suydam, who had a mill near his residence at Hoes Lane and River Road, reported the heaviest losses. He placed the value at L 2033, which covered damage to his dwelling and his mill. His neighbor at that time, Hendrick Smock, also had severe losses, including his house and his kitchen, barn, 23,000 rails, cattle, and a Negro man. Smocks also submitted their claims. (See Addenda)

Johann David Schoepf, a traveler in 1783, found the Raritan Valley intensely hot, but the landscape from New Brunswick incomparable. However, he observed that the country houses were forsaken, half-ruined. Another traveler, John Harriott, remarked eleven years later that opposite New Brunswick on the Raritan, he "could have bought an estate of 280 acres with a large house out of repair for L 400." (27)

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### Nineteenth Century: a Continuing and Prospering Agricultural Community

An observer at the end of the 18th century noted that the community on both sides of the Raritan River was very Dutch. Many had investments in property in Piscataway as well as Franklin Township within fording distance of each other. This character remained throughout much of the 19th century, and the farms included in this nomination were occupied by successive generations of descendants of just the three families who had been the pioneers--Fields, Smocks, and Onderdonks. Some houses were held by family members into this century.

The devastation following the Revolution led to replacement of buildings in many cases. Since so many no longer stand on today's landscape, it cannot be determined how many in fact were built in styles gaining popularity from about 1800, particularly the Federal, as seen in other communities. While there is just a possibility that the Smock/Voorhees House (# 9) was begun at this time, there is insufficient evidence to state it with assurance. Sometime during this period, however, the two Dutch houses (#s 3, 7) were doubled in size; having new owners take possession perhaps explains the reason. During this era, a return to a gentleman's style of living in river mansions east of New Brunswick appears to have resumed, one distinguished individual choosing to do so being Baron Hyde de Neuville, French minister, in 1817, who located two miles from New Brunswick. Although the Baron's home was removed by some distance from the "Road up Raritan," it still serves as an indication of viewpoints about the future of the river front.

Considerable inland trade over River Road resumed, with shipments of grains, livestock, and produce coming from central and west New Jersey as well as Northumberland County, Pa. Conestoga wagons, carrying as much as 28 barrels of flour each, would come down the roads. These products were loaded on sloops from large storehouses. Sides of beef, mutton, pork, and leather and iron ore were shipped as well. Vessels could carry from 30 to 80 tons. (28)

The most conspicuous examples of an ample income are seen in the erection of new houses, whose decor and elements of style show a vernacular and limited adoption of the raging American taste for

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Greek Revival. This includes in the District the Richard Field, Jr. House (# 6) and the Field/Dunham House (# 3). At this time, the 1743 John Field house (# 1) was enlarged with a one-room frame extension to the east end, with interior dressed in this style, including mantelpiece. More unusual was the construction of an I-style house (# 4), the popular ubiquitous New Jersey form, in brick masonry with emphasis at window sills. It was unique for this community.

In 1834 the construction of the Delaware and Raritan Canal was completed. In its final stretch, it paralleled the Raritan River on its southern bank in Franklin Township, with its last lock by New Brunswick. The canal was intended primarily to bring coal from Pennsylvania but had the potential for carting much more. Within the same decade, a short railroad line was built between Elizabeth and Somerville, with scarcely any impact on local life. The landscape as it appeared to Thomas Gordon, as he prepared his Gazetteer of 1834, still had much of the rural aspect. The Landing, he reported, was a center of 20 houses, with a tavern, and two stores. (29)

Ten years later, Barber and Howe depicted in their Historical Collections the same scene largely unchanged, except for additional houses present and several stores. More than one of their engravings, however, showed canal and railroad line. (30) There is a resemblance to this scene opposite New Brunswick even today, with the floodplain and lowlands incorporated into Johnson Park, partly greensward, partly natural. Agriculture was described as highly developed and progressive; the soil fertile.

In 1840, the Central Railroad of New Jersey built its major line traveling through New Brunswick to New York. For resident merchants at the Landing, it was time to leave. Their abandoned houses began to deteriorate. The erection and stylistic handling of new residences by farmers stands in great contrast to the abandonment of the mansions, dwellings, shops, and warehouses at the Landing. In the latter half of the 19th century, razing of these former monuments to prosperity and cultured taste that had become derelict was begun, first by Adrian Vermeule, who himself lived there in the 1850s, and then by George Metlar, in the 1870s, leaving only two, the former Bodine House, which Metlar occupied,

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and Ivy Hall. (Both are now on the National Register.) The contrast in life purposes between the country gentry and the down-to-earth farmer is especially illustrated by this.

By contrast, the farms "Up the Raritan" continued to be productive, though smaller in size as a result of some subdivisions within families for heirs. The same families--Fields, Onderdonks, Smocks--remained the major landowners, though a Piscataway Township map of 1850 indicates some additional names. Many represented equally old names of pioneer families, some intermarrying with the Dutch.

The Federal Census of 1850 shows in its agricultural schedules a variety of products. Young John G. Voorhees, 27, had 92 acres of his farm (# 9) in production of wheat, rye, corn, buckwheat, Irish potatoes, and hay, and kept 7 milking cows, 3 cattle, 7 horses, 2 oxen, 5 swine, and 2 mules. He slaughtered animals and churned 400 pounds of butter. The farm was valued at \$5000, and an extra \$700 for implements. Since only one youth is listed in his household besides his wife, their farm must have been very efficiently run. His nextdoor neighbor Jonathan Smock, with but 60 acres in use, had a value of \$4500, and \$250 more for implements. Martin Nevius, 28, married to a direct descendant of Matthias Smock, reported on his 100-acre farm a return of \$6000, and implements worth \$200. Richard Field Jr.'s 80 acres was worth \$7000, and \$150 for implements. He had 2 young Irish laborers and a 17-year-old "black boy." (31)

John Onderdonk, grandson of Isaac, the pioneer, 68 years old, had two sons living with him, as well as a male and female worker. He had the largest farm operation at the time--146 acres plus another 36, probably his meadowland. His worth was placed at \$11,000, with an additional \$700. William Dunham (# 2) reported 65 acres worth \$6000, and another 10 acres at \$400. He and his wife had 7 children, ranging downward from 22 years to one year. (32)

The Onderdonk/Bonham House as well as the Jonathan Smock and Smock/(John) Voorhees residences witness to the economic health of the River Road community even after the Landing ceased to live, losing to the Delaware and Raritan Canal and the railroad lines.

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As has been noted by historians, local communities at times benefited from Civil War money, and some instances have been found elsewhere in the township. (33) It may also be the explanation for the enlargement of two earlier buildings, possibly four (#s 8, 9, 4, 5) in the Victorian era in their own expressions of the Italianate, as well as the construction of others no longer standing. John Onderdonk's rental house (# 5) when in ownership in the 1860s by Bonham following a few land transactions, emerged as a handsome example.

The 1850 census as well as the county map of that year indicate the declining number of acres with each farm. Even so, income appears to have been high for the production achieved on limited acreage. Those who stayed on appear to have found a satisfying life under improved conditions. Others like Peter Onderdonk, son of John, departed about mid-century for city life in New Brunswick, where he entered upon the rubber industry and teamed up with Charles Goodyear in his early manufactures, and as a man of substance was elected Mayor (1859-60).

At the end of the century a streetcar line was inaugurated to run along River Road from its eastern end to a turnaround in the lane of the Onderdonk/Bonham property, then at times an asparagus or a celery farm. This forerunner of the great changes ahead in the 20th century perhaps informed the old farming families that the days of agriculture and pastoral life were ending. As elsewhere in rural communities, the nature of farming changed. Though the old dwellings--some 18th-century--remained in occupancy, some longtime family owners still resident in the 1920s through 1930, at last turned over possession to outsiders. In some cases, realtor/developers bought up the land. Zoning changes were made for industry. Union Carbide and others came in; Mayflower Apartments took over Fieldville beginning in 1907.

In retrospect, the houses in the district built along the Raritan Road, distanced from the wealthy mansions at the Landing, are not unusual, nor elegant, but are representative of the basic expression of vernacular architecture of New Jersey's central counties. Clearly, there was some independence shown by the settlers in staying with their own traditions, though as Wacker noted in his Land & People, there was some acculturation. Besides

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an element of cultural exchange and exposure to sophisticated design, these residents remained no more influenced than their counterparts in rural areas. The District's architecture in that regard remains "mainstream." another illustration of the American temperament as found in the settlements and rising villages of 18th and 19th century.

### The Future Prospect

An inventory survey of Piscataway Township in 1977-78 recommended the creation of an Historic District along the Road up Raritan for the placement on the Registers of all these buildings herein described and additional ones as well. There has been a long-standing interest in the history of Piscataway Township and its houses, traceable to its celebration of its tricentennial in 1966 when a laymen's survey was made of all the historic buildings then standing. The years following have seen efforts made both by individuals and organized groups to save buildings under threat; at the same time preservation steps were taken by owners of some of these houses, especially along the Raritan River Road, with two placed on the Registers of Historic Places. Newspaper clippings indicate that house tours, special celebrations, and other events have been held repeatedly to interest a wider audience in the inheritance of buildings from the past two centuries. The township created an Historic Preservation Commission.

Nonetheless, there has been a loss. Upon taking stock of the several historic buildings that have been demolished or burned down by firemen, it seems the more imperative to recognize those still standing as an encouragement to preservation, as they have been judged eligible to be placed in the nation's treasury. The ongoing loss comes not from failed structure, vandalism, or fire but willful demolition to clear the land for other buildings. As New Jersey's noted historian Richard McCormick summed it up in a statement earlier quoted: "[The Raritan River community] has earned for itself an enduring place in the annals of our history." Such were the thoughts a century ago as well, when Charles S. Deshler read a paper before the New Brunswick Historical Society on June 2, 1888 on "early roads of New Jersey," underscoring the great role in history of the Road up Raritan. In his words, "The Road up Raritan was an important one to our county at the same time that it was one of the earliest results of the pioneer plantations along the Raritan..." and "it has a strong claim upon our interest." (34)

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primary sources above.) A full-scale rendering of the map is in the possession of Dr. Paul Jennings, Piscataway Township, N.J. This map shows the Smock House to north of a stream (McEtis Brook) and another house north of it (possibly the John Field House) in the field of war controlled by the Hessians. A second map in the same Journal shows the "Plan of the area of Bound Brook, 20 April 1777."

The map spans from Raritan Landing as far as the Van Veghten Bridge on the Raritan River in Somerset County. It shows the home of the Rev. Abraham Beach, rector of Christ (Anglican) Church, New Brunswick. This dwelling is mentioned in the "Journal" in a military engagement from near Matthias Smock's house aimed across the river where Americans were ensconced.

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### DESCRIPTION OF BOUNDARIES

The Road up Raritan Historic District begins on River Road in its eastern shoulder at the NW corner of Block 510, Lot 25.13 and incorporates the said lot, the boundary line thence continues on the outer edge of the shoulder of the road to Block 560, and incorporates Lot 6; thence the boundary line continues on the shoulder edge to Block 588 and incorporates adjacent Lots 29, 30, and 1, and thence continues on the shoulder edge to Block 782 and incorporates adjacent lots 1.01, and 1.02; then continues on the shoulder edge to Block 833.1 and incorporates Lot 1; thence continues on same road course to Block 833.3 and incorporates Lot 10; thence on same course to Block 835.1 and incorporates Lot 1; thence the boundary line crosses River Road from the SW corner of Lot 9 and runs north on the outer edge of the shoulder of the road up to SE corner of Block 796, Lot 16; it then follows the southeast line of said lot westward to the Raritan River and continues on the bank of the river northward to the north side of a small run of water separating Lot 6.03 in Block 795.2 and a portion of Lot 6 between said lot and the river from the remainder of Lot 6. The

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boundary line then follows the run of water to River Road, incorporating in this area just described all of the following exempted Green Acres (Johnson Park) lots: Block 795.2, the remainder of Lot 6, and Lots 7, 8, and 9, and vacant lots 6.01 and 6.02 (the latter having narrow esements granted to AT&T and Public Service E&G), and including River Road. It also includes exempted Green Acres Lot No. 16 in Block 796.

The boundary line then continues on the outer edge of the road's shoulder north to Block 795 and incorporates Lot 5.03, resuming then on shoulder of River Road northward to the Meuly Woods tract in Block 795.1, incorporating all three adjacent lots, 1.01, 1.02, and 1 in their entirety, which fall between the Raritan River and River Road. By drawing these lines, a number of new houses flanking the Onderdonk/Bonham House lot (Lot 5.03) and a portion of the continuing Green Acres parkland back of them are excluded. The boundary then proceeds on the outer edge of the west shoulder of the road to a point opposite the NW corner of Lot 25. 13 in Block 510, and crosses the road to the point of beginning. All hedgerows or border foliage along the shoulder edges are also included. The boundary lines on the river side of the road are drawn to include only the salient lots: one surviving historic house and the lots representing the former pastureland now

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preserved as a Green Acres park. A handful of modern houses at the far ends of the riverside road segment within the district have been excluded by drawing the end boundaries tightly, since these houses do not relate to the historic character of the district.

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### JUSTIFICATION OF BOUNDARIES

The building sites in the Road up Raritan Historic District are included in their entirety because their lots are relatively small in size and are landscaped and otherwise shielded from a view of intrusive modern development, except perhaps for Site # 1. The sites are not adjacent except in one instance but they are not distant from one another, either, as the entire length of this linear district on River Road is but 1.2 miles. Between house sites there is often dense foliage, and trees mark the road edge so that a sense of continuity within the historic area is provided. Some photographs were taken to illustrate the scene.

On the east (interior) side of the road are several nonhistoric buildings interspersed between sites, which were excluded by running the boundary at road edge. These buildings are for the most part inconspicuous. One photograph (# 10) taken from the John Field House eminence, however, was included to show a view of one of the few newer houses more visible than others.

The road itself is a site as it is the basis for the rise of this particular early river settlement near a shipping center; it also related directly to its life for two centuries as a major transportation route. It runs as a spine through the District where the greatest concentration of significant buildings representing the history of the river area are to be seen. River Road, through the segment in the District, recalls the larger and important role of the Road Up Raritan as a whole in the military operations of both armies during the American Revolution.

The creation of a park with Green Acres funding that incorporates passive flood plain has led to the preservation of the river frontage that belonged with the farms in the district and is included as much as was reasonably possible. It includes as well the 24-acre tract called Meuly's Woods (given to Middlesex County and now part of Johnson Park), which represents the pastureland of the 18th-century Isaac Onderdonk farm.

Before the creation of the park, however, a number of small lots fronting on River Road had been sold, with approximaely a half

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dozen now having houses. Where buildings exist, the park was limited to the lots behind their rear lot lines. Since these modern buildings are noncontributing, though for the most part inconspicuous because of size and embracing foliage (see Photo #s 22 and 27), the boundaries were drawn to exclude them. While all of the land behind these improved lots down to the river is part of the undeveloped Green Acres Park (Photo # 23) and might have been included as a contributing element in the District, it was excluded because it was believed that it made for a cleaner boundary line in the process of eliminating the small lots.

In the midst of this new excluded housing is the Onderdonk/Bonham House, Site # 5, which is included. This house serves to pull together the two large park areas that are included to its north and south beyond the immediate house lots, which reflect the original character of the farm plantations' pasture and water plain. In wintertime, the river can be glimpsed on and off through bare trees in the park, especially where road and river are not widely separated. A lone farmhouse on this side of the road amidst meadowlands, as now seen, is a close approximation of historic land use, as river flooding had early on discouraged building.

The boundaries chosen to mark the north and south end of the District on the river side of the road were determined by the conclusion of historic structures and sites (Meuly's Park). Small house lots at road edge begin beyond the boundary at each end and make no contribution. Even so, they are relatively unnoticeable because of roadside foliage. A photograph (# 49) taken at the southern end, opposite Site # 9, reveals that the passerby sees only mailboxes to suggest a habitation. The character of the District is introduced at this boundary by a large field flanking McEtis Brook on the river plain. This natural area (Photo # 48) with its stone arch bridge can be entered on foot, and from it a sense of the historic landscape can especially be appreciated.

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Photographs 1994-95

The photographs were taken by the following individuals:

Ursula C. Brecknell, consultant  
Dr. John E. Brush, retired Professor of Geography, Rutgers University  
Dr. Paul Jennings, chairman of the Piscataway Township Historic Preservation Commission, and an amateur photographer  
Carol Natarelli, owner of the Lewis Onderdonk House

Colored slides were taken by Ursula Brecknell; Arthur Brecknell, a semi-professional photographer; and Dr. Jennings

Negatives are in possession of the Commission

Photographs as indicated on accompanying and in text:

1. Approach to District on ancient "Road up Raritan" leading northeastward from Raritan Landing. Flood plain and alluvial plain on left are now part of Johnson Park under Green Acres. This segment is cultivated for current recreation; within District it is maintained in a natural state.
2. The John Field House, earliest surviving home of the English family of Fields, after whom today's community of Fieldville is named. Built of stone: two lateral rooms one room deep. On eminence above road, camera pointing northeastward.
3. Datestone in northwest gable wall. The Field family was given to dating their homes, two other examples being known. Thick coating of stucco on stone walls was a necessary step to preserve the building.
4. Rear facade, camera facing southerly. Photograph shows random laying of stone walls and separate exterior entrance for each room.
5. Heavy stone blocks making up foundation wall (loosened by water penetration) in the cellar under end room.

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6. Evidence of age of construction as seen in large adzed joists and very wide floorboards visible in cellar.
7. Interior view of original door for opening on rear wall (in frame section) now no longer visible on exterior and blocked off under a stairway in third room from left. Door of wide boards hangs on Dutch strap hinges.
8. Second room from left, original house, shows doorway to end room and widely spaced beaded joists above.
9. Construction in attic story, showing old tie beam, rafter, and purlins.
10. View from eminence of John Field House looking toward River Road on its southwesterly path. Recent sale of farm led to small development and secondary road cut too close to house property. General impression of country-like scene along road is captured in photograph.
11. Field-Dunham House, with camera pointing eastward, house facing toward River Road. House enlargement toward east is evident in end bay.
12. Entrance and portion of Greek Revival portico.
13. Corner block decor found on all door lintels on first floor.
14. Unusual use of a grille over a doorway, rarely seen in this region. Opening faces toward center hall from parlor.
15. Kitchen in rear ell of house. Probably of same age as main block. Plain mantelpiece, windows of 9 over 6 panes. Joists are somewhat close to each other and not of great proportion.
16. Isaac Onderdonk House. Left side of house with hall and entrance represents original dwelling (before raised to two stories). On slight rise of land above River Road. Camera pointing northerly.
17. A close-up view showing house with Greek Revival entrance and porch after mid-19th-century update and parallel addition to right of center hall. Final addition is replacement by the Meuly family of an unimportant kitchen wing at mid-20th century after ten years

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of abandonment.

18. Cellar under first house unit. Lintel log strung from wall to wall rather than built up from the ground illustrates how corner fireplaces were sometimes supported in 18th century.

19. Corner fireplace supported by base shown in preceding photograph. (There is a cellar under only this room, not a surprising custom for the time.) Mantelpiece and hearth enclosure represent post-Revolutionary changes. Window of this main dwelling room and others on this first floor level contain 12 over 12 sash (with replacement muntins).

20. Addition, which doubled house in size and gave it a second story, followed old construction techniques as seen in framing between front and rear rooms.

21. Smoke house, presumably 19th century, with 20th-century lean-to addition. Built of brick, with some reconstruction of roof and door. Camera pointing eastward.

22. On slightly larger property, the Isaac Onderdonk House still retains the early run that flowed to the river. Photograph taken alongside the driveway, looking southwestward to River Road and exhibiting the rural aspect of the setting.

23. Lewis Onderdonk House. Built on portion of homestead farm, evolving from smaller house of single file of rooms, I style, to present size through additions at back, with final addition about 50 years ago. Original structure an unusual example of local employment of brick construction for a modest dwelling. Camera facing more or less eastward, with house facing River Road.

24. Another unusual feature of Lewis Onderdonk House was a cellar fireplace for cooking and possibly washing purposes. Position of chimney relates to the period of time when house was of single depth; it was centered on gable end wall.

25. Lintel log in throat of chimney showing results of continual use. Chimney is at southeasterly end of house.

26. Additional evidence of changes in house form as seen at southeasterly gable wall of house. Outline of earlier pair of rafters on chimney document a lower roof line. This chimney, now found on front slope of roof, is flanked by two attic windows, which still have shutters held by shutter dogs.

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27. Side road cut next to Lewis Onderdonk House on southeast in recent times exits into River Road, facing westward to Green Acres woods and river. Shown is one of a few noncontributing (and excluded) 20th-century residences to illustrate the nonimpact such building has had on District.

28. The Onderdonk/Bonham House, facing northward. This is the only remaining building on this side of the road within the District, although there were never more than a handful. The house is a quite handsome example of Italianate in its final form, although it appears to have reached this size in stages of additions.

29. Sole cellar, room size, enclosed by stone foundation walls, has large joists and floorboards of about 9-inch width. This suggests a core dwelling, perhaps for farm help, around which a large house of double file of rooms, rising from a brick foundation, was built, with additional rear ell.

30. Hallway and staircase of Onderdonk/Bonham House with elements of style placing it in second half of 19th century.

31. Property behind house, once the river pasture land of the Isaac Onderdonk farm, extends to edge of Green Acres that are part of the Johnson Park complex. The same distance, doubled, reaches to the river bank. Camera pointing westward.

32. The Richard Field, Jr. House. Dating probably in the 1830s, with Greek Revival details, this is a later homestead for this early family of settlers. Camera pointed northerly. The house has gable end to road. It occupies a few acres.

33. The side wing of the Richard Field, Jr. House, which possibly is somewhat older than main block. It has been doubled in size. There is a foundation under the first two-bay section with base for a large cooking fireplace.

34. The Matthias Smock House, with suggested date of 1722, considered oldest dwelling to stand on River Road now. Built at two times, the left side of house with hall came first. The symmetrical addition perhaps dates to c. 1800. The dwelling faces

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southward. It has a short setback from the road. Camera pointing northerly.

35. Main dwelling room features one of two back-to-back fireplaces, the other in smaller rear room, as in Isaac Onderdonk House. Paneled chimney breast is a reproduction based on evidence found by restoration expert. Large exposed timbers span through both rooms.

37. Section of exposed wall in back room on gable side facing to road (first unit of house) shows construction and infill of interstices with mud and hair.

36. Early surviving outbuilding, a smoke house near dwelling. Some repairs were undertaken and a window added. Located a short distance to east of house.

38. Interior of smoke house, evidencing its early construction.

39. A 19th-century carriage house, converted to a two-bay garage, facing southward at some distance behind house. Photographed with camera pointing easterly.

40. Second well house built on Matthias Smock farm by late-19th-century descendant. Located at some distance back of and to the right of house. Photograph taken with camera pointing easterly.

41. Jonathan Smock House erected on one-half of the Matthias Smock farm after a land division of mid-19th century. Has about the same setback as other buildings, but is oriented to River Road. Photograph taken with camera pointing northeasterly.

42. View of Jonathan Smock House from rear, facing westward. Rear wing appears to be older than main block and may have been a tenant house at an earlier time. Note 9/6 sash in house itself on upper story.

43. Surviving barn for Jonathan Smock House. Located at short distance from house. Camera was pointing northeasterly.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Road up Raritan H.D.  
Piscataway Twp., Middlesex Co., N.J.

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44. Driveway of Jonathan Smock House showing its relation to McEtis Brook (a property boundary line c. 1800) and the roadscape, which has a rural character. Traffic represents about as much vehicular activity as encountered at non-commuting hours.

45. The Smock/Voorhees House. Historically the property was held by a second generation Hendrick Smock, who may have erected a dwelling in early 19th century; after several sales, it was acquired by young John Voorhees c. 1850. Its main visage today is of a Late Victorian house that projects picturesquely on all sides from a deep setback. Photographed from River Road with camera pointing northeasterly.

46. Rear wing of Smock/Voorhees House and well house, camera facing northerly.

47. Stone-arched bridge over McEtis Brook. Taken from river plain, camera turned eastward.

48. McEtis Brook as it wends its way through the former pasture land of the Smock family to the Raritan River, now protected under Green Acres as part of Johnson Park. This photograph is typical of the flood and alluvial plain included in the District. Camera pointed westward. At one time in the 19th century, a Smock had his workshop to the north of the brook.

49. River Road, the "Road up Raritan," basically unchanged, showing the still remaining atmosphere of rural surroundings even with an occasional visible mailbox or driveway marking a limited number of modern or post-1955 houses. Photograph taken looking along the road northwestward from opposite the Smock/Voorhees House.

New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places

# ROAD UP RARITAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Piscataway Township  
Middlesex County

## KEY

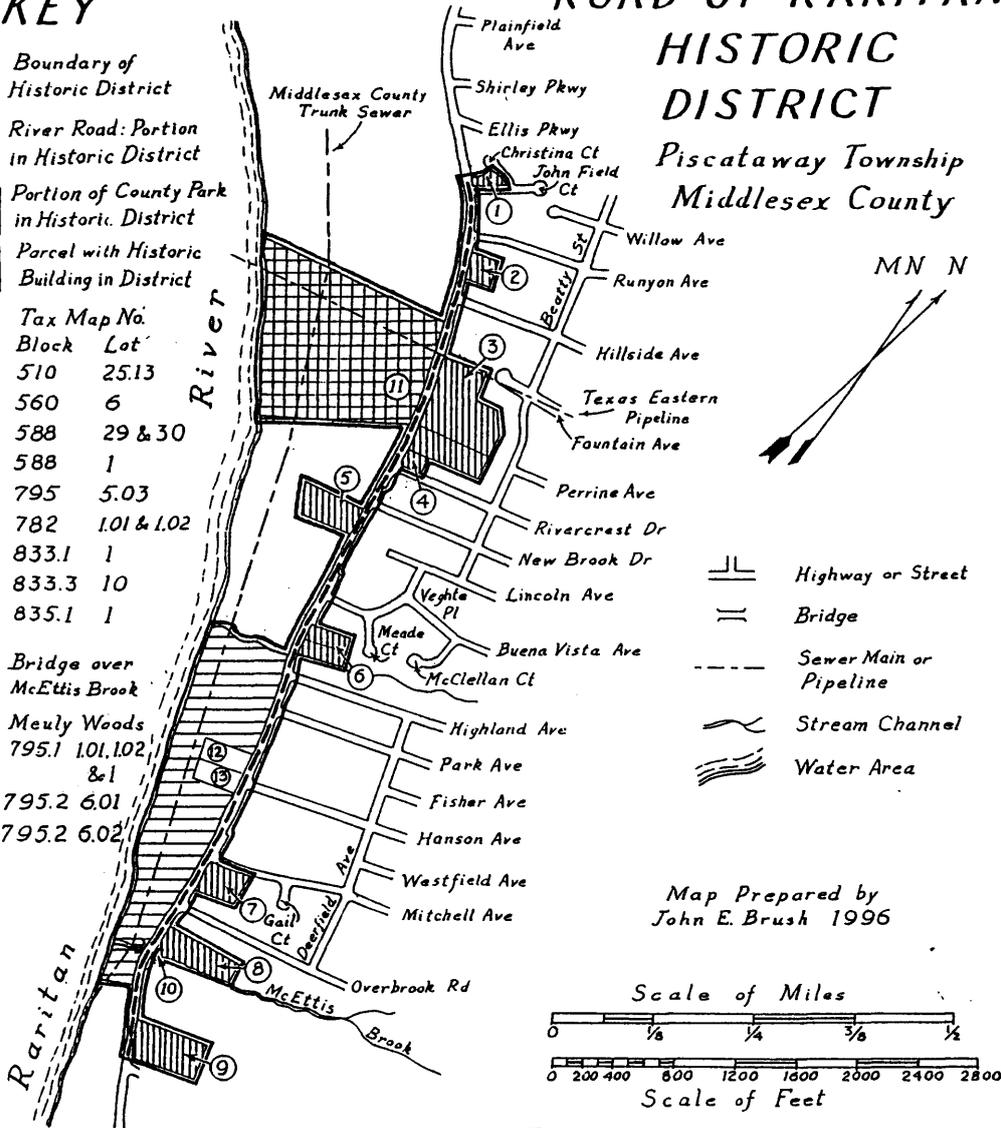
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-  River Road: Portion in Historic District

-  Portion of County Park in Historic District
-  Parcel with Historic Building in District

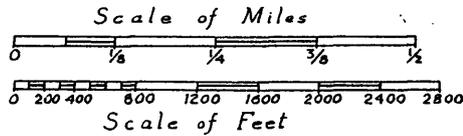
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2	560	6	
3	588	29 & 30	
4	588	1	
5	795	5.03	
6	782	1.01 & 1.02	
7	833.1	1	
8	833.3	10	
9	835.1	1	

10 Bridge over McEttis Brook

	Meuly Woods
795.1	1.01, 1.02 & 1
12	795.2 6.01
13	795.2 6.02



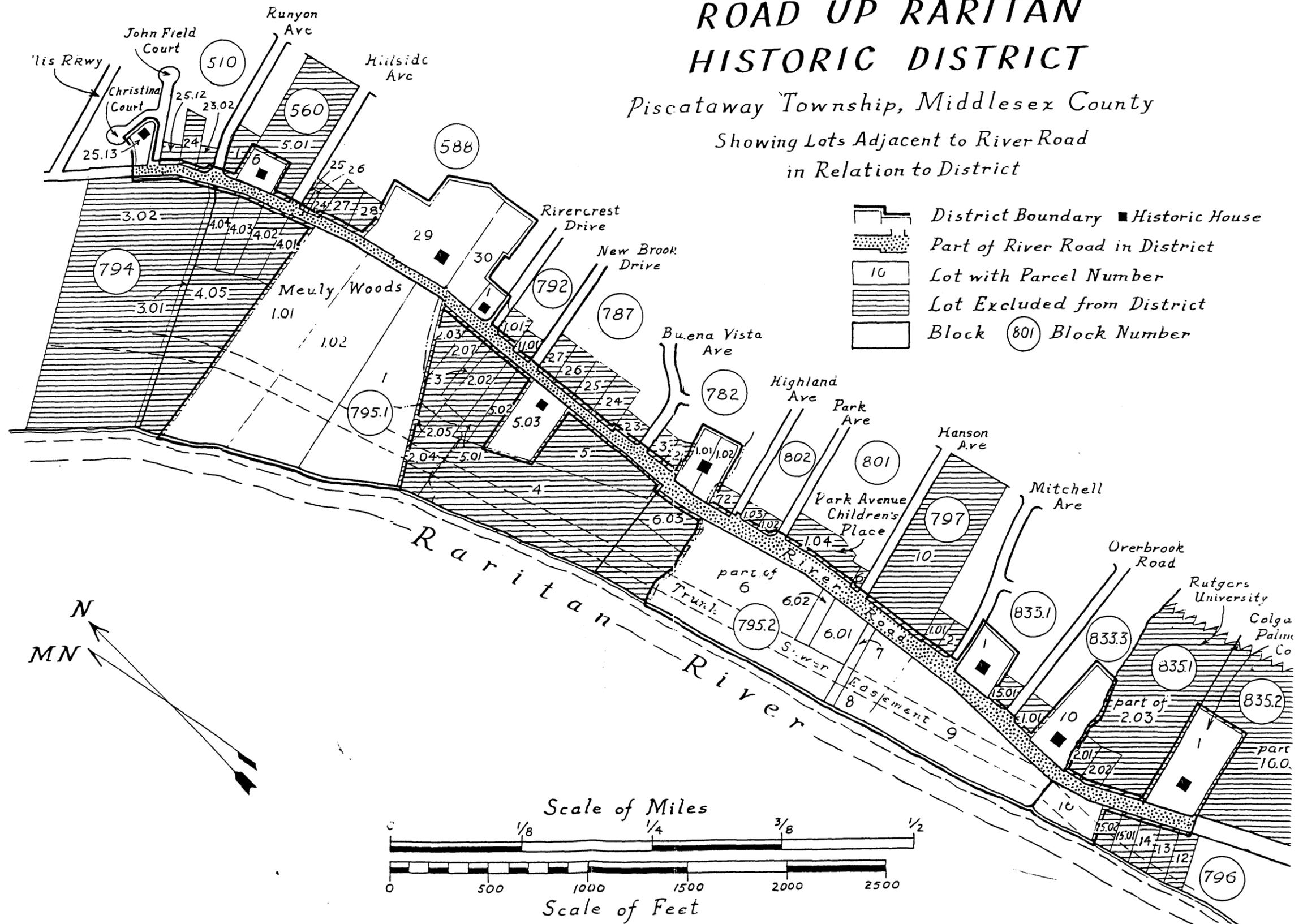
Map Prepared by  
John E. Brush 1996



# ROAD UP RARITAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Piscataway Township, Middlesex County

Showing Lots Adjacent to River Road  
in Relation to District



# New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places

## ROAD UP RARITAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Piscataway Township  
Middlesex County

### KEY

Boundary of  
Historic District

River Road: Portion  
in Historic District

Portion of County Park  
in Historic District

Parcel with Historic  
Building in District

Tax Map No.

Block Lot

510 25.13

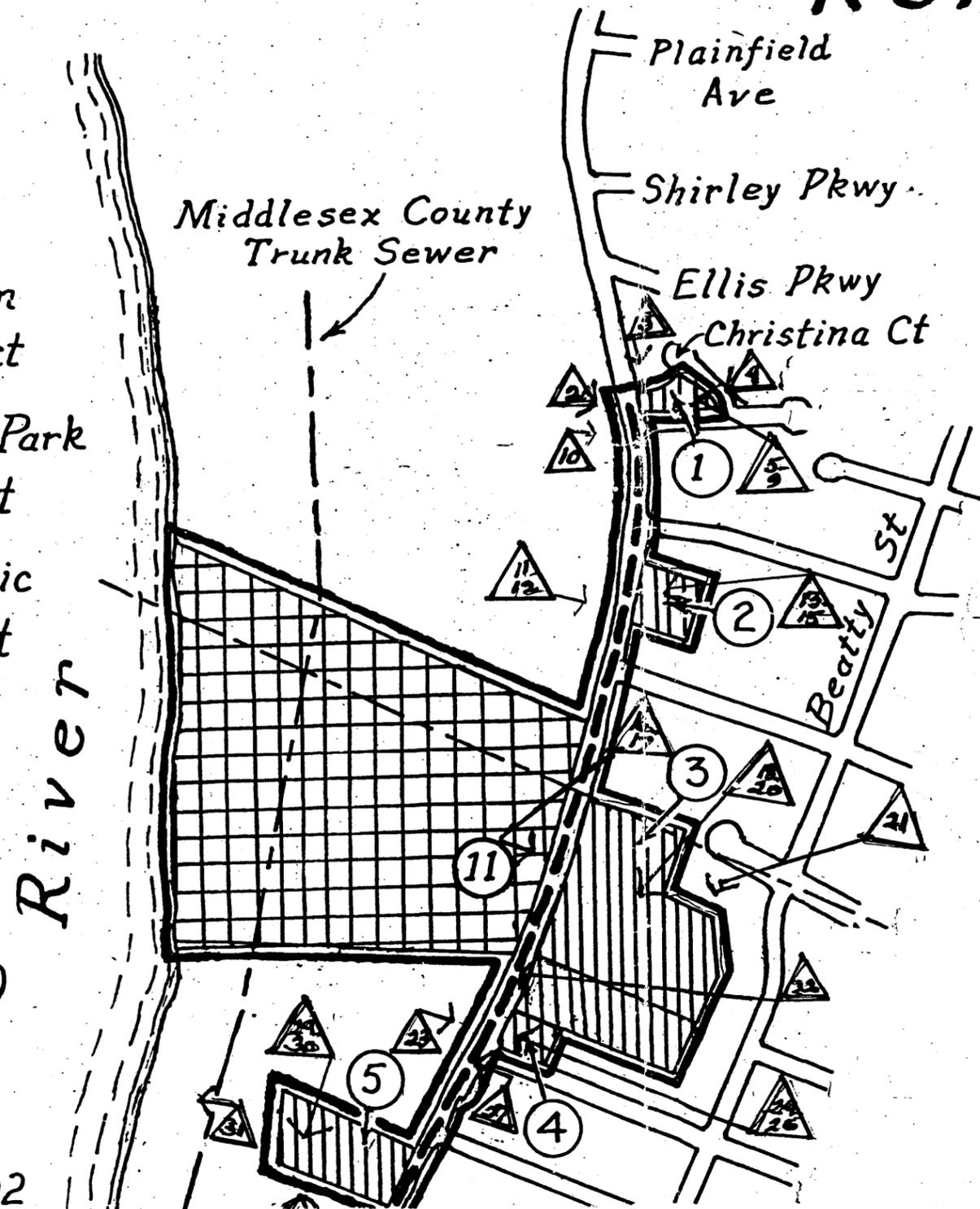
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588 29 & 30

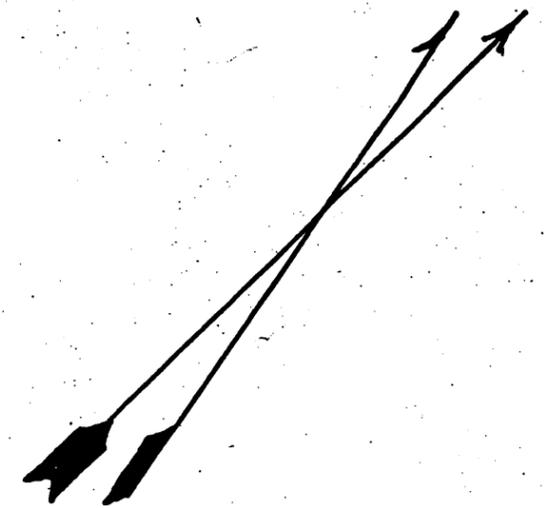
588 1

795 5.03

782 1.01 & 1.02



MN N



△ Photographs

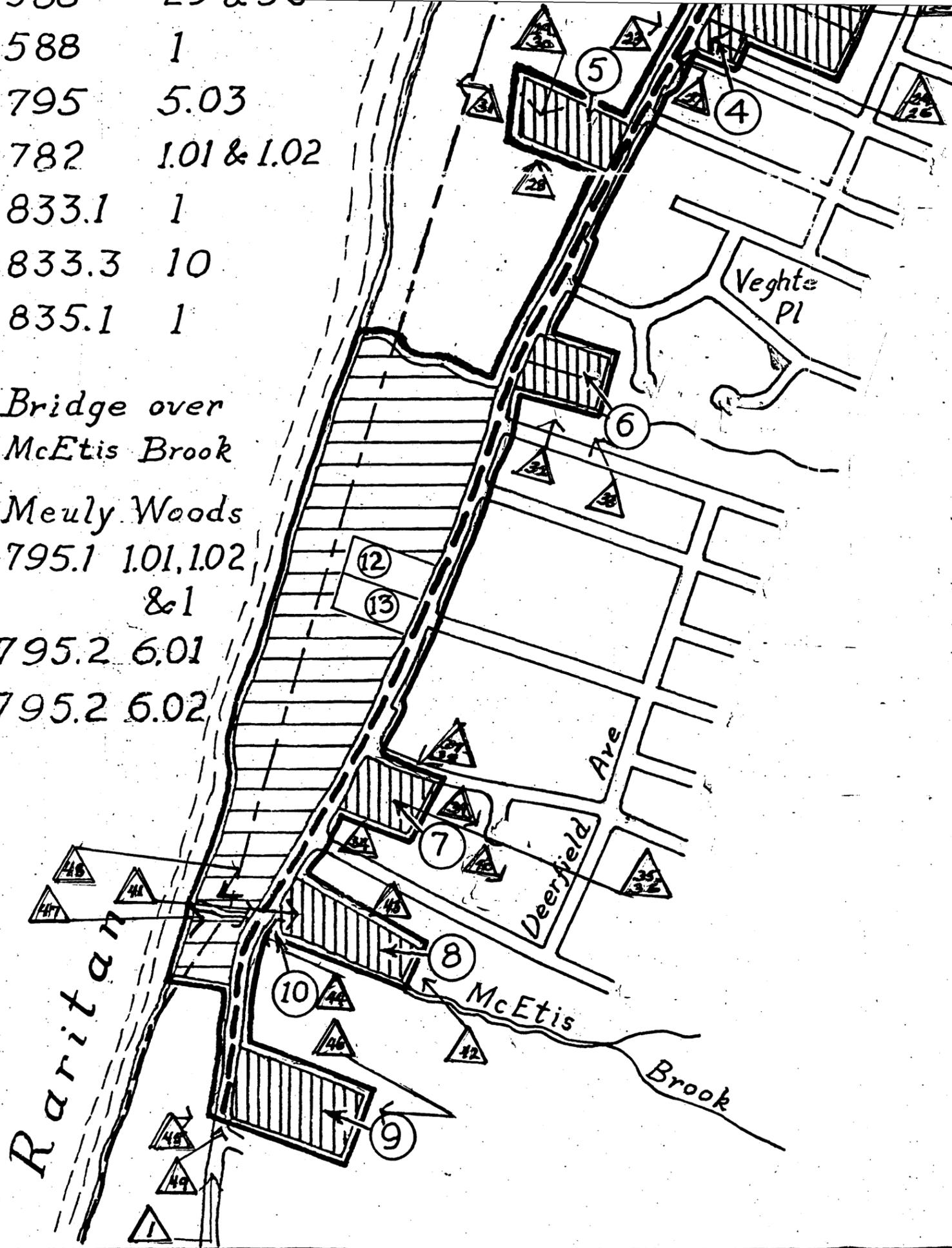
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5	795	5.03
6	782	1.01 & 1.02
7	833.1	1
8	833.3	10
9	835.1	1

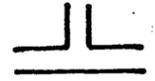
10 Bridge over  
McEtis Brook

11 Meuly Woods  
795.1 1.01, 1.02  
& 1

12 795.2 6.01

13 795.2 6.02



-  Photographs
-  Highway or Street
-  Bridge
-  Sewer Main or Pipeline
-  Stream Channel
-  Water Area
-  Sites

Map Prepared by  
John E. Brush 1996

